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EDITED BY  
RAMAPRASAD DAS

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## AN OUTLINE OF K. C. BHATTACHARYYA'S PHILOSOPHY

KALIDAS BHATTACHARYYA

K. C. Bhattacharyya's (1875-1949) philosophy has passed through three distinct periods of development. During the period (till 1918) he wrote one book—*The Subject as Freedom*—and three papers, *Some Aspects of Negation*, *The Place of the Indefinite in Logic* and *The Definition of Relation as a Category of Existence* (the last one published much later, in 1956). The second period extends from 1925 to 1932, during which he published the book *The Subject as Freedom* and six papers, viz. *The Jaina Theory of Anekantavada*, *Sankara's Doctrine of Maya, Knowledge and Truth*, *Correction of Error as a Logical Process*, *Fact and the Thought of Fact* and *The False and the Subjective*. The major papers published in the third period (1934-38) are *The Advaita and its Spiritual Significance*, *The Concept of Philosophy*, *The Concept of the Absolute and its Alternative Forms*, *The Concept of Value* and *An objective Interpretation of Image*. During this period he delivered three series of lectures, one on Kant, another on Sankhya and a third on Yoga. These lectures were published much later, in 1956.

Throughout the first period the central problem he was concerned with was 'the definite and the indefinite and the relation between the two.' The definite is that which is so clearly experienced that, at least at the time it is experienced, no further question arises regarding it, whether as a whole or in any of its aspects. The indefinite is just the opposite. For the empiricists, whatever is sensuously given is definite in this sense; and so is the logical, the conceptual, the relational side of a content, for the rationalists. Both empiricists and rationalists start with their respective definites

which, for them, are their anchorage-grounds and ultimate criteria for acceptance. Yet, however, neither of them have succeeded in getting rid of the corresponding indefinite completely. Each has tried indeed to interpret his indefinite as much as possible in the language of his definite, but some lingering indefinite had always to be accommodated. The empiricists, for example, have tried hard to understand logic and relations in terms of the sensuous given, and the rationalists the given data as imperfect reason, as nagging evils to be got rid of or even as the self-negation of reason. But the former have yet to relate relations—however term-wise they are understood—to genuine *terms* that are given, and in that process the problem recurs; they have also to compare and assess against one another the different empirical renderings of logic, which cannot be done unless some basic non-empirical—and so far, indefinite—logic is admitted. The rationalists, similarly, are unable to get rid of the given wholly; they have to admit some dark background, some surd somewhere, and the Hegelians could reduce it to reason's act of self-negation only at the cost of the concreteness of the given.

Nor can we peacefully join the definite and the indefinite—in the present context, thought and experience. Not only would that require the impossible task of relating relations to relata but, as a matter of fact, no such joining is needed at all, each claiming to offer, in its own terms, a full-bodied philosophy. Whether for the empiricists or for the rationalists, philosophy would consist in a continual attempt—may be through stages—to have the definite as truly definite, i.e. continually to definitize whatever indefinite is experienced as clinging to it. For the rationalists, the ever-unmanagable 'given' at whatever stage is the indefinite involved which can be truly definitized only in so far as thought, otherwise called the logical, is experienced as having continuously freed itself from the given, which would be



just another way of saying that at every stage, down to brute sensuousness, the given is experienced as thought giving itself—not only as itself but also as *not the given*. A is A proper when it is not only A as such but also contains in its being the negation of everything else, i.e. everything-as-negated. In later periods of his thinking Bhattacharyya has called it 'thought distinguishing the given.' Thought as such he would call *dissociate* thought, and for him, in later periods, dissociation and distinguishing are but the negative and positive forms of *freedom*.

The account given so far is found in his paper *The Place of the Indefinite in Logic*. But the same thought he has developed in two different ways in his *Some Aspects of Negation* and *The Jaina Theory of Anekantavada* (written probably in the first period, though published towards the beginning of the second). In the former he has shown how from a simple pluralistic situation 'A, (and) B,' where A's difference from B is only indefinite, there develops a relational form of negation (A as not B) which is more definite; how, again, this negation as itself a relation and the basis of all other relations is experienced, more definitely, as constituting A, etc. etc. In the other paper, *The Jaina Theory of Anekantavada*, he has shown that this precisely, though in another form, was at the basis of the Jaina theory of *anekānta*.

So far with how the rationalists would, through stages, definitize the (indefinite) given. During the second period of his thinking, however, he turns to the empiricists and shows (i) that even as involved in the given there are aspects or facets which demand to be rendered definite, (ii) that while the given is always an 'object, something foreign to me, these aspects or facets cannot be definitized in any object-language and (iii) that the only way of definitizing these would be by equating them to subjectivity. Incidentally,

for the first time, he contends that object, in so far as it is foreign to me, must always remain indefinite that way, for the foreign is always contingent: I can never have complete assurance regarding it, even though I had to accept it apparently without questioning simply because it exercised maximum brute force. In contrast, the subjective, just in so far as it is subjectivity proper, is just truly myself and, therefore, definite, not only because all contingency clinging to objects has lapsed but further because just as much as it is *dissociated* from all objective traits and *distinguishes* these it shines in its own light: it is experienced more and more as self-evident subjectivity and, therefore, as the quintessence of definitude.

The aspects or facets of the given which, for the empiricists, are problems and, therefore, indefinite are of various kinds. They are not merely (i) the logical and (ii) relations, they include also (iii) false appearances detected as false, (iv) the sense of the *reality* of what is sensuously given, i.e. the *truth* of empirical propositions, and, as shown profusely in his *The Subject as Freedom*, one's body perceived from outside, one's body felt from within, knowledge of different types of absence and known absences of different types, and, then, image, idea, etc. etc.

In the papers *Sankara's Doctrine of Maya*, *Correction of Error as a Logical Process* and *The False and the Subjective* he has detailed the exact problems involved in the concept of the false (detected as false) and shown how these problems are to be solved and what are the further implications. Before correction the false appeared to have been in the space occupied by other real things, but after correction it is definitely known as not only not there then but incapable of having ever occupied that space, though for that reason it cannot be declared to be or to have been *nothing* imme-

diately. Yet, basically, it could not have been an object in the real space. What it all means is that in spite of its appearance as an object there, it now *claims* (*demand*s) to have been a mode of subjectivity that only appeared as an object. What is demanded that way is that its apparent objectivity has somehow to be experienced as liquidated into subjectivity. Bhattacharyya has drawn further Vedantic (Advaitic) implications from this.

In his paper *Knowledge and Truth* he has treated truth in practically the same manner and, through an analysis of the ordinary notions of knowledge and truth (and their relation), shown that although knowledge, ordinarily, is a psychic state (and, therefore, objective so far), it is the awareness of its truth which for the first time makes us realize not only that knowledge, essentially, is pure subjectivity (a pure subjective act), but that its truth is only another name of this very realization. This, again, is Vedantism and Bhattacharyya has, as usual, drawn out further metaphysical implications. It is in this essay that, for the first time, he discusses the relation between Kant and (Advaita) Vedānta. He holds that if Kant in his theory of knowledge had made clear the concept of pure subjectivity as transcendental presupposition of knowledge-as-psychic-state, it is Vedānta which, with its concept of truth, has gone beyond that and developed an ontology out of it.

His main task during this second period of philosophizing was thus to show that whatever, at the naturalistic level, is felt as indefinite (problematic) is ultimately—i.e. when to be realized as definite—pure subjectivity. This is true not merely of *falsity* and *truth* but also of relations and whatever is called 'logic.' The indefinite which, at the first stage, only fringed the definite given and demanded to be definitized is at the second stage shown capable of definite realization as but pure subjectivity.

In his book *The Subject as Freedom* he takes up, as already mentioned, quite a number of such indefinites (paradoxical phenomena) at various stages of experience and shows through careful analysis that in the attempt at definitization at each stage some brute given—whether it be the perceived object outside, or one's own body perceived from outside (which is the same thing as the *perception* of the body), or one's body as felt from within (=feeling the body from within), or the four types of absence and their experiences, or positive psychic facts like image or thought (and their sub-forms)—gets dissolved into what is, relatively to the stage or sub-stage concerned, subjective—some form of subjectivity that dissociates itself at every stage from all apparent object-legacy and distinguishes such object. All this he has shown through a wealth of details, and yet he claims that his task is not one of an ordinary psychologist. What ordinary psychology calls subjective is only a psychic *fact* (state) experienced as an *object* through what it calls introspection. Bhattacharyya, on the other hand, admits two other types of subjectivity—sub-psychic and super-psychic. The sub-psychic which ranges from *percept* right up to the experience of absence of various grades cannot be introspectively experienced as in any manner *dissociated* from the corresponding objects, i.e. as graded forms of freedom, which psychic *facts* always are, though experienced equally as *objects* through some sort of confusion with the objects to which they ultimately refer. The super-psychic, on the other hand, has no object whatever to get dissociated from and, therefore, no chance of getting confused with that. It is subjectivity in its purest form, aware of itself only, i.e. self-shining, whether unreflectively or reflectively. As unreflective, it is, in Bhattacharyya's terminology, *feeling*; as reflective, it is what he calls 'spiritual introspection.' In contrast, every psychic *fact*, at whatever stage, is as much an introspected (at least introspectable) *object* as somehow also identical with that

introspection. It is identical with that just in so far as it is dissociated from the perceptual object which is ultimately, though often indirectly, the object for that mental stage (knowledge).

In *The Subject as Freedom* Bhattacharyya admits of a stage even beyond spiritual introspection. Spiritual introspection is, to all intents and purposes, Kant's transcendental apperception which is ever an *act*, never anything that *exists* or even indicates some substantive beyond. Kant, again, has never made it clear whether his transcendental apperception (theoretical reason) is still personal (individual) or over-personal. Bhattacharyya, on the other hand, is very clear on both the points. Spiritual introspection, though undoubtedly enjoyed as personal—the First Person 'I'—stands yet, in moral situation, in a family resemblance with the Second Person 'you' and even indirectly with the Third Person 'he' and, in religious consciousness, negotiates, in the form of communion, with the over-personal God. Through both these cases there peers some demanded (though not yet realized) denial of the personal 'I'-hood—a demand, in other words, that what is to be realized at a stage further beyond, through this negation of the 'enjoyed' individual subjectivity, is the absolute which, according to him, is still subjectivity, i.e. freedom, though now only *contemplated*. As contemplated, it cannot be said to be without *being* (unlike Kant's transcendental apperception). The absolute, according to him, is the ultimate subjectivity as Freedom. Toward the beginning of the book *The Subject as Freedom* he has very clearly analysed the concept of *subject* (in all the three Persons—I, you and he) and *object* (represented by the pronoun 'this').

It is this idea of the absolute as only the *demanded* 'truth'—the truth that is only symbolistically thought, never literally, and yet one that demands ontological status as 'Being'—which Bhattacharyya has patiently developed in his

paper *The Concept of Philosophy* at the third period of his philosophizing. The paper contains two other novel features. First, he has developed the concept through detailed analysis of three other concepts in a hierarchical order viz. (empirical) *fact*, *self-subsistent* (object-in-general) and subjectivity (= first Person 'I') as *reality*; and, secondly, what is strikingly novel, he contends that the absolute can be symbolistically thought in three alternative ways.

Fact, according to him, is (i) spoken of as what need not have been so spoken, i.e. intelligible as apart from any speaking of it, (ii) thought literally and (iii) either sensuously perceived or imagined to be so perceived. The self-subsistent (object) is understood, on the other hand, as (i) not intelligible except as spoken, though independent of the spoken belief of an individual, as when I say 'There is an object' or 'objects are of such and such kinds,' (ii) thought literally and (iii) neither sensuously perceived nor imagined to be so perceived. As for *reality* (First Person 'I' as consciously 'enjoyed'), it too is understood exactly as the self-subsistent object except that the content here is not approached in the *objective attitude*—as an *object*, whether empirical or metaphysical. It is only enjoyed, not experienced as other than my speaking, though as *understood* by the hearer and the speaker alike it is independent of the spoken belief of either and has so far an ontological status. While, however, fact, self-subsistent object and enjoyed reality are all literally thought, the absolute which is believed to be beyond reality even (and which Bhattacharyya calls 'truth') is not even literally thought. It is speakable only through the negation of that speaking, as whatever demands to transcend speaking itself through that negation—in effect, as what is only demanded through whatever sort of self-negation of the First Person I. All the four kinds of thought are knowledge, the content in each case being a *belief* that is spoken out, though in the last case it is

only 'known as ever knowable' (but never as unknowable). Its ontological status is not thereby denied.

This absolute demands to be known in three alternative ways—either (i) as the ultimate Being, the 'truth' that is ultimate self-identity in that it has not to be distinguished from any other ulterior being, or (ii) as the ultimate dissociation, the ultimate freedom, the process of dissociation at its maximum where no being is left to be dissociated from, or (iii) as indeterminate alternation of (i) and (ii). All the three alternatives are alternative formulations of the absolute from the point of view of the seeker, never a *literal* representation of the absolute; and all the three are equally (though alternatively) formulations of truth eventually. The first of these alternative formulations is that of Advaita Vedānta, the second of the (Mādhyamika) Buddhists and the third of Hegel (and the Śaivas). If the first is the absolute as truth and the second freedom, the third is 'value' which is as much being as constant distinguishing. Hegel missed the indeterminate *alternation* of truth and freedom and wrongly spoke of their *unity*. "The absolute may be truth or it may be what truth is not or it may be their mere distinction without any unity in the background."

This concept of the demanded alternative formulations of the absolute he has developed more elaborately in his paper *The Concept of the Absolute and Its Alternative Forms*. There he has started with a reflective analysis of the relation between the content and consciousness in knowing, feeling and will, reflection in each case being knowing itself as reflective, feeling itself as reflective and will itself as reflective. In each case there emerges a unique distinction—relation between content and consciousness, which, indefinite so far, demands to be rendered definite according as the demand is of knowing, feeling or will. He has shown that knowing feeling and will have their formulation of the absolute as

truth, value and freedom (reality) respectively. Truth is the content as ultimately to be freed from its reference to consciousness ; freedom is consciousness as ultimately to be freed from its reference to content ; and value is a sort of free unity of content and consciousness. The three absolutes are not together. The real (freedom) is not true, but the true may be real ; truth is not value, but value is not untrue ; and while the predicates real and true do not apply to value, reality (freedom) cannot be said not to be value. The absolute is in this sense an alternation of truth, value and reality.

Details of the concept of value he has developed in his paper *The Concept of Value* and shown there once again the respective roles of feeling, knowledge and will, feeling being the dominant factor and knowledge and will only subordinate.

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## A PHENOMENOLOGY OF ABSENCE

[An interpretation of Professor Krishnachandra  
Bhattacharyya's theory of knowledge of absence]

KALYAN KUMAR BAGCHI

### I

PROFESSOR Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya's theory of knowledge of absence is contained in his tract on *Subject as Freedom*.<sup>1</sup> The distinctive feature of this theory, it appears, is that it presents an analysis of absence and distinguishes between the *different grades* of it on the basis of the different grades of our cognition of it. In so far as this is so, Professor Bhattacharyya may be said to present a phenomenology of absence. We propose to present an analysis of Professor Bhattacharyya's theory in this paper, seeking thereby to lay bare the phenomenological aspects of it (i.e. the theory) and countering at the same time, other theories of absence that are either *manifestly* ontological or evince a *sympathy* with an ontological interpretation of absence.

A rough classification may be made of objective facts into those that are present and those that are absent. Those that are present are in spatio-temporal contexts. Those that are not present in those contexts are absent. Now, this classification will appear from Bhattacharyya's point of view, to be all-too-naïve. "Objective fact," writes he, "may be said to be present as external, as internal and as absent." With objective fact present "as internal," we are not *immediately* concerned. But then, it appears that according to Bhattacharyya "present in spatio-temporal contexts" would be only a *mode* of being present; another mode of being present would be 'being present as absent.' What we have called 'present in spatio-temporal context' would be 'present as external' in Bhattacharyya's terminology.

Even with regard to 'space and time' in 'present in space and time,' some proviso is to be made. Space and time here (i.e., in 'present in space and time') may be taken in reference to the subject as percipient locating things as outside his body, as external. The body may be taken to be the point of reference and, *in reference to the body*, objects may be *taken to be* external. If this is admitted, we have objects that are present to body as external instead of external objects in a body-neutral, i.e., percipient-neutral reference. Now, if 'present in space and time' is 'present to body as external,' what shall we say about what Bhattacharyya calls, 'present as absent'? If, as it appeared initially to us, 'present as absent' is a *mode* of being present in Bhattacharyya's view, wherefrom is its presentness, so to say, derived?

Usually, by 'present' we mean 'present in space-time.' From this point of view, what is not present in space-time context is absent. But Bhattacharyya insists that an object may even be 'present as absent.' So from his point of view 'present in space-time' would be just a mode of being present, and 'present as absent' would be as good a mode of being present as 'present in space-time.' But this is just the point at issue. It is Bhattacharyya's onus to show that an object that is absent may yet be said to be 'present.'

Everything ultimately hinges on the *differential* of 'present.' In spite of its naivete, the commonsense view with which we started may here throw some light. According to this view, the defining mark of 'present' is 'being present in space-time.' And Bhattacharyya would say that an object that is absent has *its own* space-time.

## II

To understand how the absent object has its *own* space, we have to understand the nature of space in reference to

present and absent object. The space in which a present object is located is in reference to the body of the percipient. It is a present object in so far as it is *outside* the percipient's body *and* in so far as the percipient takes himself to be a part of the space-frame. In the case of absence, "the absence is where my body is not. It is outside the space round my body." So, it may be said that space outside the body of the percipient is framework of the 'present as present' and space outside the space outside the body of the percipient is the framework of 'present as absent.' Clearly, space is understood by Bhattacharyya in a phenomenological context. There would be no apprehension of an object as present if the subject does not take himself to be *as* in his body, as percipient *in* space. But the percipient is also dissociated from the body and, for that matter, from the space-framework. *Pari passu* with the different degrees of dissociation from the space round the percipient's body, there is the realization of different degrees of absence. It is in those phenomenological spaces, revealed by different stages of dissociation from bodily or perceived space, that absence is to be placed. They constitute the *loci* of the different kinds of absence. Thus Professor Bhattacharyya presents us a *phenomenology of absence* on the basis of the different degrees of *felt* dissociation from physical space. His theory is thus marked off sharply from ontological theories of absence which distinguish between different *kinds* of absence in a subject-neutral reference. The consciousness of detachment from space, in which absence is understood on Bhattacharyya's theory, is as much distinguished from the (supposed) perception of absence as an objective fact of which the Realist Nyaya-Vaisesika thinker speaks as from the (equally supposed) apprehension of absence through 'ideal experiment' on the locus (of absence) of which Bradley speaks. None of these types of theories does justice to the *felt* detachment from space round the percipient's body.

There is as little mystification in assigning role to the percipient's body in regard to the apprehension of absence as there is in assigning role to it in regard to the apprehension of *present* objects. At bottom, the point that is involved is a point about mode of interpretation : Is space to be interpreted *without* any consideration being paid to its being organically felt by the subject ? Bhattacharyya has already, i.e., in his theory of the apprehension of objects "present as external" decided in favour of the *contrary* of the suggestion contained in the foregoing question.

The cognition of *present* absence is as little a psychological affair like memory, imagination, expectation, etc. etc. as it is a cognition of a physical fact. Empirical Psychology indeed confines itself to the alternatives of 'physical' and 'psychical.' Absence cannot be located as a physical object in outer, i.e., physical space, but then, *on that account*, the cognition of absence or the cognition of an object as absent (that these cognition are *distinct* will be shown later) cannot be regarded as memory or imagination. As Professor Bhattacharyya points out, there may *not* be any definite image of the absent object and yet there may be the cognition of absence as a *present* fact on the locus of absence. The irreducibility of the latter to the former is accountable to the definite consciousness of the objective fact of detachment from physical space. Such consciousness of detachment from perceived space is characteristically different from perceived space is characteristically different from representation of the past which we have in image. On the contrary, corresponding to the cognition of absence or the cognition of an object as absent is an objective counterpart which is the present fact of detachment from physical space.

### III

It is this fact of the feeling of presentness of absence that is ignored in most of the non-phenomenological theories of

absence, if we may so label the theories that are contrary to the spirit of Professor Bhattacharyya's theory in which a phenomenology of negation is presented in terms of the consciousness of detachment from physical space. One of the first men to criticise Professor Bhattacharyya's theory was Dr. A. C. Das. Referring to the instance cited by Professor Bhattacharyya, viz., that of a person's noticing 'emptiness' on a field subsequent to his having noticed a tree on it without his being able to call up before his mind's eye the image of the tree, the absence of which confers the empty look on the field, Dr. Das writes: "I may try to indicate the difficulties involved in the situation by asking a question. When two persons come to the place under consideration—the observer himself, and a new comer with no predispositions whatever in regard to the field in question—after the tree has been removed, *should there be a difference in the cognitions on the part of the two men with reference to the field?* I may answer for the exponent to the effect that, whereas the former may perceive emptiness as attaching to the field, whatever features latter may come on, any sense of emptiness would be far from his perspective. Were emptiness in reality an object, or even, as has been suggested, a quality what prevents him, I wonder, from preceiving it?"<sup>2</sup> Dr. Das has his own solution: "The only thing that is, on analysis, found to account for the difference between the perceptions on the part of the two persons there is the relevant past experience of the observer ...the emptiness appears to be an effect of an ideation performed upon what is regarded as its locus."<sup>3</sup>

We have a two-fold comment to make upon Dr. Das's contentions. First, what he says is true, but not relevant. Admittedly, there would be a difference between the cognitions of the two men imagined by Dr. Das. None-the-less, there would be, on the part of the original perceiver, an awareness of *present* absence which no amount of 'ideation' could explain. On the contrary, the fact of present absence

apprehended by the original perceiver leaves no scope for 'performing' any 'ideation.' And this brings us to the second point which is a point about, what we have earlier called, 'mode of interpretation.' People of Dr. Das's persuasion absolutely ignore the fact of felt detachment from physical space on which consciousness of negation rests.

The present fact of felt detachment from physical space rules out the two possibilities, viz., of reducing the knowledge of absence to that of the absent and of reducing it to that of the locus. The first attempt has already been disposed of. The second attempt, made e.g. by the Prabhakara-Mimamsakas is also fated to failure. Mere knowledge of the locus cannot explain the sense of detachment from the physical space (i.e. the locus itself) on which, as we have found, the knowledge of present absence rests. Present absence is, of course, known in connexion with the knowledge of the locus, but this is not to reduce the cognition of present absence to the perception of the locus. Without the perception of the locus, present absence is of course not known, but then the perception of the locus is just a condition of the cognition of present absence and a condition of a cognition does not enter into the determination of the nature of the cognition.

#### IV

Armed with the phenomenological perspection from which we propose to understand Professor Bhattacharyya's theory of absence, let us now make a *gradational* distinction between the different absences revealed through the different degress of detachment from physical space.

First of all, absence may be understood in the sense of "bare look" on something. To take Professor Bhattacharyya's own example, a tree might have been cut off from a field perceived long ago and the removal of the tree confers a bare look on the locus, i.e., the field. This bare look *persists* even



if the tree is definitely remembered,—a point that ought to be remembered if only to counter the point, already disposed of, that absense is reducible to the *memory* or *image of the absent*. Now the absence or bare look on the field may be regarded as a character as a realist like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinker would say. This is admitted by Professor Bhattacharyya too. Says he, "...the absence of the tree is known as a character of the locus, the perceived field where the tree stood." Again, "As the place is perceived, absence as a character of the place may also be claimed to be perceived. Yet, as Professor Bhattacharyya says, there is the perception of absence "as a character of the object in the feeling that it is not a character....." That is to say, the place which is now *without* the tree may be conceived to be *without the withoutness*, so to say. The absence *might not have been* on the locus. So that absence or withoutness may be imagined to be *outside the space-frame* in which perceived objects are located. It is not so with a character of an object like colour" "...to perceive the place with a colour is not necessarily to imagine that it might be without it." The point, then, that emerges out of this contrast between a character of a place and absence conceived as a character "in the feeling that it is not a character" is this, that in the knowing of absence there is a suggestion of detachment from perceived space, "....a suggestion of the absence being *outside* the space where the locus stands—the space round the body....."

In the second place, absence may be understood in the sense of the "*missing*" of an imagined content. Once again, to counter the suggestion that knowledge of absence is memory, Bhattacharyya writes, taking the example of a book, "The book as absent is *immediately* known as a present objective circumstance that is neither remembered nor merely imagined." The "*missing*" of an imagined content is characteristically different from the entertainment of an image in memory or in imagination. When a book is missed,

what is the objective counterpart to the subjective feeling of missing? Not the book, for the book is just what is missed. Corresponding to the subjective feeling of missing, there is an objective fact which, however, is not *absence* as in the foregoing example, but a fact which may be described as '*something that cannot be reached by my body*,' '*something which is not on the locus that might be perceived in the sense my body could reach it but which is on the contrary outside the space of the locus of absence, which is mistaken to be perceived.*' Phenomenologically speaking, missing is not '*not finding something in objective space*' but '*finding something as detached from objective space.*' Thus the objective fact of an imagined content being *absent* is not the same as the objective fact of the *absence* of a content, because there is the phenomenological factor of the former (i.e., the imagined book as *absent*) being *not* reached through my body and the latter (i.e., the *absence* of the book) *being* so reached. Therefore, the propositions 'The book is absent' and 'There is here the absence of the book' are not only not identical but also not equivalent.

In the third place, '*absence*' may be understood as the absence of an object *now* absent. This is really a grade of absence more reflective than the first grade of absence which is understood in the sense of an empty or bare look in a place. The bare look that the place 'wears', to use the very picturesque description of Professor Bhattacharyya, is a matter of perception, notwithstanding the fact that such perception is with "the feeling that it is not a character." The object as *now* absent, i.e., the object presently absent cannot, however, be seen, cannot be located in physical space: there is, in the present context, a definite, i.e., conscious detachment from physical space which was only suggested in the first grade of absence. The '*now* absent' is "known in the consciousness of not perceiving it"; and such consciousness cannot be *reduced* to the knowledge or perception of the

locus, for the perception of the locus cannot account for the sense of detachment from perceived space in which (i.e. the sense of detachment) the apprehension of the 'now absent' consists. The 'now absent,' then, is known in a mode of knowledge that Professor Bhattacharyya *intentionally* calls non-perception to distinguish it from perception which as a mode of knowledge consists in the apprehension of what is located outside the body. As to the framework in which the 'now absent' is to be placed—as distinguished from the framework of the 'now present' which is physical space—more will be said later.

In the fourth place, absence may be understood as the *absence of an imagined content as characterised by the locus*. This, again, is a more reflective grade of absence than the grade in which absence is understood as the missing of an imagined content. This too is a matter of conscious non-perception. Supposing I imagine my friend here. I do not miss him ; I only say, 'How I wish he were here ! His presence here is 'too good to be true.' His absence does not qualify the present place ; on the contrary, his presence is imagined to be cherished in reference to the present place. As Professor Bhattacharyya says, "To imagine an object in a perceived space is a special form of imagination in which the present locus is viewed as characterising and not as characterised by the imagined content." There is here, i.e., in the example cited, an immediate realization of absence in reference to an imagined content, i.e., the place with my friend, *with* the consciousness of not referring the absence to the perceived locus,—in short, with conscious non-perception.

## V

We now come face to face with the question of questions : What is the space of absence ? Of the four grades

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of absence we have distinguished after Professor Bhattacharyya, the third and the fourth grades of it are more reflective than the first and the second grades of it respectively. The third and the fourth grades of absence are known in 'conscious non-perception.' Then the question arises : What about the *position* or space of the 'now absent' object? The 'now absent' object is felt to be dissociated from the space round the body. It has no position. There is a bodily feeling of not feeling it. It is thus "related to the feeling of the body." It is *as though present* in the felt body. What, now, is this, viz., being present in the felt body? Presentness here has no space-time co-ordinate. It is detached from physical space and therefore is not reducible to externality. Body fails to find a location for it in objective space. There is a feeling of a lack of position on account of the attempted reference on the part of the body, —which (i.e., the reference) is all that the presentness of the 'now absent' object amounts to. Really, the presentness of the felt body is only *implicit* whereas that of the 'now absent' object is *explicit*. It is *implicit* as it is not explicitly phenomenological. It is not phenomenological because it has not cast off its bodily snare. When the bodily snare is cast off, presentness emerges as explicitly phenomenological and therefore as explicitly distinct from psychic fact that is dissociated from the present consciousness of the 'now absent' or 'present absent' object, then, is the consciousness of what is present *minus* space-position. It is a chapter in the movement of the subject's dissociation. It is in this perspective that Bhattacharyya's theory of absence is to be understood.

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1. Vide, *Studies in Philosophy* (Calcutta, 1958), Vol. II. All references in this paper are to the chapter entitled 'Knowledge of Absence as a Present Fact' in Professor Bhattacharyya's book *The Subject as Freedom* included in *Studies in Philosophy* Vol. II.
2. That these cognitions are *distinct* will be shown later.
3. *Negative Fact, Negation and Truth*, p. 18 (Calcutta, 1942).
4. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

# DUHKHA SATYA

PRABAL KUMAR SEN

## I

THE teaching of Buddha centres round four cardinal truths : *Duḥkha Satya, Samudaya Satya, Nirodha Satya and Mārga Satya*. They are truths about suffering, its causes, its cessation and the way leading to this cessation. As in many other schools of Indian Philosophy, suffering is the starting point of philosophical speculation in Buddhism. *Duḥkha Satya* is thus the cornerstone of Buddhism. It is, therefore, surprising to find misleading accounts of it in a number of authoritative books. Such accounts could be excused so long as paucity of materials stood in the way of correct representation. In the last three decades quite a number of Buddhist texts have appeared in print, and it is high time that such misconceptions were removed. The implications of this cardinal truth have also been conceived differently by Buddhist thinkers. The present paper has a twin purpose : to provide an acceptable version of this cardinal truth, and to bring out some of its implications.

## II

The current versions of *Duḥkha Satya* usually take either of the following forms :

- (a) All is suffering.
- (b) There is suffering.

We shall try to show that neither of these versions is satisfactory.

Dasgupta's account of *Duḥkha Satya* runs as follows :  
".....with the Buddha there was nothing permanent, and

all was change, and all change and impermanence was sorrow. This, then, is the cardinal truth of Buddhism, and ignorance concerning it . . . represented the fourfold ignorance which stood in the way of the right comprehension of the fourfold cardinal truths (*ariya sacca*)—sorrow, causes of the origination of sorrow, extinction of sorrow, and the means thereto.”<sup>1</sup>

Put in a nutshell, this account would be identical with version (a). This version is not, however, acceptable to all the sects of Buddhism. The *Vaibhāṣikas*, for example, cannot declare all things to be suffering. A little thinking about the four truths makes it clear that suffering must have a beginning and an end. For the *Vaibhāṣikas*, *Ākaśa*, *Pratisaṅkhyānirodha* and *Apratisaṅkhyānirodha* are ‘*asaṃskṛta dharma*’—they do not have any beginning. Thus, they cannot regard these three things as suffering. Moreover, no sect of Buddhism can regard the cessation of suffering or the path leading to it as suffering. Dasgupta’s version is, thus, untenable for obvious reasons. (Dasgupta has referred to *Āṅguttara Nikāya* III.85 in support of his account. It is indeed surprising to find that *Āṅguttara Nikāya* III.85 contains *nothing* that supports Dasgupta’s version. It contains, on the other hand, some comments about the desirable conduct (*śīla*) of monks). It must be added in all fairness that Dasgupta is not the only person to commit this mistake. Several centuries ago, *Mādhavācārya* committed the same mistake in his *Sarvadarśanaśaṃgraha*.<sup>2</sup>

Radhakrishnan’s version is as follows: “..... Buddha became convinced of the four noble truths, that there is suffering, that it has a cause, that it can be suppressed, and that there is a way to accomplish this.”<sup>3</sup>

This provides us with version (b) of *Duḥkha Satya*. While this version is not wrong, it is nevertheless inadequate, for it does not bring out the full depth of *Duḥkha Satya*.

For the Buddhists, Duḥkha Satya is a noble truth—an 'Ārya Satya.' While a noble truth is a truth, all truths are not noble truths. The foregoing account provides us with a truth—for it is a fact admitted by everyone that there is suffering. But the truth expressed therein is not a noble truth.

But how are we to distinguish between ordinary and noble truths? The Buddhists have suggested a number of criteria of noble truths. They are as follows :

- (a) "Noble truths" are those truths that can be realized by noble (i.e. enlightened) persons.
- (b) 'Noble truths' are the truths that belong to the enlightened one's (this is almost equivalent to the former one).
- (c) The 'noble truths' are so called because of the nobleness implied by their discovery (this again is almost the same as the first one).
- (d) The 'noble truths' are so called since the truths themselves are noble—in so far as they are faithful accounts, and beneficial to all.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that there is suffering is realized by unenlightened persons as well, for everybody has the experience of painful feelings. Hence, the mere fact that there is suffering is not a truth for the enlightened one's alone, nor is it 'noble' in any of the above mentioned senses. Thus, this version of Duḥkha Satya is not quite satisfactory. More over, it goes against Abhidhamma texts (e. g. Yamaka, 174) which distinguish Dukkha from Dukkha-Sacca.

To the lines quoted above, Radhakrishnan has added the following : "The first noble truth is the tyranny of pain. Life is suffering."<sup>5</sup>

This addition is definitely an improvement upon the previous account, but for reasons to be discussed shortly,

we cannot still accept it as the proper version of *Duḥkha Satya*. Radhakrishnan's queer rendering of 'Ārya Satya' as "Aryan truth"<sup>6</sup> suggests that he did not pay sufficient attention to the distinctive features of the noble truths.

### III

So much, then, about the unsatisfactory accounts of *Duḥkha Satya*. We now turn to some Buddhist texts for arriving at a better version.

Vinaya Piṭaka gives the following account of *Duḥkha Satya*.

"This, oh monks, is the noble truth of suffering : birth, decay, disease, death, association with unpleasant objects, and separation from pleasant ones, and not getting the desired things—are all full of suffering. In short, the five aggregates, which are the objects of clinging, are painful."<sup>7</sup>

Sutta Piṭaka provides us with a slightly altered version, where disease, association with unpleasant objects and separation from pleasant ones have been omitted from the list ; while sorrow, grief, woe, lamentation and despair have been added to it.<sup>8</sup>

As we see, these versions contain an enumeration of different kinds of physical and mental suffering. The concluding cryptic remark declares the five aggregates as suffering. These aggregates are matter, feeling, perception, tendency and consciousness ; and they constitute the psycho-physical complex known as 'living creature.' It is not at first clear why these aggregates are regarded as suffering. The accounts do not also point out a feature that is common to all the different types of suffering, so that it is difficult to understand what is exactly meant by 'Dukkha' in these passages. For



an answer to these questions, we turn to Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa.

It is extremely difficult to describe the nature of suffering, and Buddhaghosa has tried to express it with the help of synonyms like 'pilana,' 'badhana,' 'abadha' and 'parilaha.'<sup>9</sup> He also gives an interesting theory about the nature of suffering that is based on the derivation of the word 'dukkha.' The word 'du' means 'vile'—'dupputto,' for example, means 'a vile son.' The word 'kha' stands for empty space (ākāśa), and as such, signifies emptiness or unreality (tucchatta). The word 'dukkha' thus stands for something that is vile and imaginary. Things that are impermanent, harmful and devoid of substantiality are characterized otherwise by ignorant people, and this leads to trouble, whence these are called 'Dukkha.'<sup>10</sup> Later writers are silent about this ingenious explanation.

Buddhaghosa has tried to explain the nature of suffering through a classification of suffering as well. He has adopted the classification that is found in Vinaya Piṭaka, but he also proposes a new classification that provides us with more insight. According to him, suffering is of seven kinds: (i) intrinsic suffering, which comprises physical and mental afflictions, (ii) suffering pertaining to collocations, (iii) suffering due to change, (iv) concealed suffering, (v) exposed suffering, (vi) indirect suffering and (vii) direct suffering.<sup>11</sup> Strictly speaking, this classification is overlapping, and hence, unsatisfactory. Later Buddhists have accepted only the first three types (Duḥkhaduḥkhta, Saṃskāraduḥkhata and Vipariṇama-duḥkhata). Buddhaghosa himself identifies the first and seventh types, and brings the second, third, fourth and fifth under the sixth type as they are the basis of some suffering or other.<sup>12</sup> The distinction between direct and indirect suffering has profound significance. Direct or intrinsic suffering is realized by everyone: only the enlightened ones can realize that things that do not appear to be

unpleasant should also be regarded as indirect suffering, and this is the crux of *Duḥkha Satya*.<sup>13</sup>

Truth cannot be, however, a personal preserve of any one—and the noble truths are no exception to this. The enlightened persons differ from the unenlightened ones only in respect of sensitivity. The unenlightened persons, being comparatively insensitive, cannot realize *Vipariṇāmaduḥkhata* and *Samskāraduḥkhata*.<sup>14</sup>

Two questions remain to be answered : (i) in what sense are *Vipariṇāmaduḥkhata* and *Samskāraduḥkhata* (suffering arising out of change and collocations) suffering ? (ii) Why are the five aggregates regarded as suffering ?

Suffering arising out of change occurs when pleasant sensations change into unpleasant ones that lead to suffering. Suffering pertaining to collocation requires some explanation. The collocations are produced by causes and conditions (*hetu* and *pratyaya*). The Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination implies that no effect arises without its specific causes and conditions. The collocations are, thus, entirely determined or conditioned. Determination is nothing but the negation of freedom, and the lack of freedom that characterizes the conditioned entities is, for the Buddhists, the most menacing form of suffering. Suffering, in the ultimate analysis, thus turns out to be lack of unconditionality.<sup>15</sup>

We can now easily understand why the five aggregates are regarded as suffering. These aggregates are oppressed by birth, old age, death etc, and they are the ground of further suffering. They have birth as their initial suffering, old age as their medial suffering, and death as their final suffering. Furthermore, all of them are produced by causes and conditions.<sup>16</sup>

Subsequent Buddhists, excepting Nāgārjuna and his followers, have substantially agreed with Buddhaghosa on major points, though they have introduced some refinements

as well. The author of *Abhidharmadīpa* and *Vibhaṣa-prabhavṛtti* maintains that collocations defiled by depravities like attachment, aversion etc, are to be treated as suffering. Vasubandhu and Yaśomitra also hold a similar view.<sup>17</sup> Apart from this, we find in *Vibhaṣa-prabhavṛtti* four alternative versions of *Duḥkha Satya* : it may be looked upon as something conditioned, or as the eight things as enumerated in the *Vinaya Pitaka*, or the five aggregations that are the object of clinging, or the five links of the twelve-linked *Bhava-Cakra*, counting from *Namarūpa* to *Jarāmarāṇa* along with two other links, viz. *Upādāna* and *Bhava*.<sup>18</sup> The first three versions are by now familiar to us, and the last one can claim some novelty.

*Nāgārjuna* and his followers, however, do not agree with these views. Such characterizations may serve some practical purpose, but they are not tenable from the ultimate point of view. Suffering, according to former thinkers, is an effect, and for *Nāgārjuna*, whatever is dependant on something else, is, in the long run, indescribable.<sup>19</sup>

#### IV

The rest of our discussion deals with another important question : Does the acceptance of *Duḥkha Satya* amount to the denial of pleasure as a fact ?

*Bhadanta Śrīlāta* and a few others answer this question in the affirmative. According to them, there is nothing as pleasure. Apart from citing scriptural evidence (which we will not discuss), they put forward the following arguments :

- (a) we cannot specify the causes of pleasure. The things that are supposed to produce pleasure produce pain when they are in excess (e.g. eating) or when they are employed at some other time (e.g. sandal-paste in winter). Since nothing produces pleasure alone,

there can be no genuine cause of pleasure. Consequently there cannot be any pleasure (sukha-hetva-vyavasthānāt).

- (b) The so-called pleasure is only the cessation of a particular suffering. No one feels 'pleasure' unless some suffering has been mitigated. Since the usages about pleasure can be very well explained in terms of removal or mitigation of suffering, there is no necessity for postulating the existence of pleasure (duḥkha-pratikāre ca sukha-buddheḥ).
- (c) Replacement of one suffering by another is regarded by unreflective persons as pleasure. Thus, a man carrying a load on his shoulder feels relief or pleasure when the load is shifted to the other shoulder (duḥkha-vikalpe ca sukha-buddheḥ).

This view has been severely criticized by Vasubandhu and Yaśomitra. Apart from citing scriptural evidence to the contrary (not to be discussed here), Vasubandhu has offered the following counter-arguments :

- (a) What is the nature of suffering? If it is painful, why is it so? If it is so by virtue of being harmful, then whatever is beneficial is pleasure. If it is so by virtue of being undesirable, then whatever is desirable is pleasure. The point of Vasubandhu seems to be that as pleasure and suffering are opposed to each other we cannot retain one of them and reject the other.
- (b) The objects of pleasure are certainly the cause of pleasure, but they are not the only cause of pleasure. When the other causes are absent, pleasure may not be produced even when the objects are there. Hence, it is not correct to say that the cause of pleasure cannot be specified.
- (c) While some pleasure is felt at the removal of some pain, this is not true of all pleasures. The pleasure

generated by a fragrant smell does not presuppose discomfort produced by a bad smell.

- (d) The man who shifts the load from one shoulder to the other experiences some pleasure due to a real change of his physical condition, though it is temporary. Had the feeling of pleasure been identical with a new suffering, the man concerned would have felt more and more pleasure in course of time, and this is not the case.

Śrīlāta's arguments thus turn out to be based on undue assumptions. Vasubandhu's view is free from this defect, and being closer to uncontradicted experience, commends itself to us.

Śrīlāta and his followers may raise one more problem. If pleasure and pain are fundamentally different, how can pleasure be transformed into pain? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that what is commonly known as pleasure is only pain in disguise, and that its true nature is revealed in due time? Vasubandhu would point out that there are cases where a thing possessing a certain characteristic changes into a thing with a diametrically opposed characteristic, and yet the two characteristics are not to be identified, if change is regarded as something real. A sweet juice becomes sour when it is fermented; but is that a sufficient ground for maintaining that sweet and sour are basically the same taste? Likewise, a pleasant feeling can be transformed into an unpleasant one even though pleasure and pain are not the same thing—otherwise, the concept of change would be meaningless.

We should, however, remember that Vasubandhu has no hesitation in recognizing the fact that pleasure is in the long run something undesirable, as it is inextricably connected with suffering. He would certainly maintain that pleasure is characterized by *Vipariṇāmaduḥkhata* and *Śamskaraduḥkhata*.

But he points out at the same time that it is not characterized by Duḥkhaduḥkhata. And if it is not so characterized, there can be no reason for obliterating the distinction between pleasure and suffering proper.<sup>20</sup>

It is a matter of regret that the relevant portion of Abhidharmadīpa, which is highly critical of Vasubandhu, is lost to us. Had it not been so, we might have known how Vasubandhu's views were received by his successors. As matters stand, his views seem quite acceptable to us.

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13. See *Prasannapadā on Mādhyamika-Karrikā*, Ed. P. L. Vaidya, Mithila Research Institute, 1960, p. 209.
14. See *Prasannapadā*, idem.
15. See *Visuddhimagga*, p. 640, *Pramāṇa-Vārttika*, Verse Nos. 170-80 and Manoratha's comment's thereon in *Pramāṇa-Vārttika* Ed. Dwarikadas Sastri, Bauddhabharati, 1968, pp. 62-63.

16. See *Visuddhimagga*, p. 505.
17. See *Abhidharmadīpa*, with *Vibhāṣāprabhāṛtī*, Ed. P. S. Jaini, K. P. Jaiswal Institute, 1959, p. 52, and *Abhidharmakośa*, with *Bhāṣya* and *Sphuṭārthā*, Baudhabharati, Vol. I; 1970, p. 29.
18. See *Vibhāṣāprabhāṛtī*, pp 1-2.
19. See *Mādhyamika-Kārikā*, Chapter XII and *Prasannapadā* thereon, op. cit. pp. 100-103.
20. For this controversey, see *Abhidharmakośa with Bhāṣya and Sphuṭārthā*, Vol. III, 1972, pp. 880-86.

## SOME REMARKS CONCERNING WITTGENSTEIN'S CONCEPT OF LOGICAL NECESSITY

DILIP KUMAR BASU

That we infer, count or calculate is a contingent fact. It is not self-contradictory to suppose that we were without these activities. But it does not follow from this that the way we infer, count or calculate is contingent. Wittgenstein thinks that our ways of inferring etc. are contingent too. And the reason why they are so is that they are shaped by our natural history and environment, and these are as they are—the given. (*PI* p. 230)<sup>1</sup>

If it is the case that our ways of inferring, counting etc. are determined by the contingent facts of our natural history, then logical and arithmetical laws become contingent. And how does one show that such laws are relative to the facts of natural history? The position, it seems, cannot be established unless it is shown that changes in our natural history would correspondingly effect changes in our logic and arithmetic. Wittgenstein says :

...if anyone believes that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones, and that having different ones would mean not realizing something that we realize—then let him imagine certain very general facts of nature to be different from what we are used to, and the formation of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to him.  
(*PI* p. 230)

Wittgenstein's many imaginative examples, such as the pupil's continuation of the +2 series, people who are not bothered by divisions by " $n-n$ ", etc., purport to suggest alternative natural histories (I shall also use 'form of life' as a variant for 'natural history') with alternative ways of



calculating, counting and so forth. Since Wittgenstein has a doctrine of natural history as setting limits to our thought and understanding, he is faced with a dilemma. Either his imaginative examples are intelligible to us, in which case the above doctrine needs to be revised, or they are not, in which case Wittgenstein's position remains unestablished.

Barry Stroud has suggested that Wittgenstein may have a way of escape. 'The point of Wittgenstein's examples of people who do not "play our game" is only to show that our having the concepts and the practices we have is dependent upon certain facts which might not have obtained. They show only that "the formation of concepts different from the usual ones" is intelligible to us; but it does not follow from this that these concepts themselves are intelligible to us'.<sup>2</sup> I will try to show that Wittgenstein cannot take this escape-route without making certain concessions which would gladden the heart of Frege.

Let us assume that Wittgenstein has been able to make his point so that we have intelligible accounts of people with alien natural histories and alien counting and other practices. Because of our natural history, these practices are unintelligible to us. The pupil continues the +2 series by writing 1004 after 1000, and his attitude of self-righteousness baffles us. He neither committed a mistake nor misunderstood the rule "Add 2", so he tells us. But we realize, in spite of differences in natural history, that the pupil's practice is a *counting* practice, that he has a *number-series* different from ours, something we do not understand. Wittgenstein even wants us accept the pupil's claim of rationality when he is not thus "playing our game" (RFMI 115).

These admissions, necessary as they are for establishing the intelligibility of the claim that there could be alternatives to our conceptual schemes and practices, pose difficulties for Wittgenstein. He has shown, by his own admissions, that

he cannot make good his point unless he accepts a critique across forms of life in terms of a battery of concepts which permit communication among peoples with different natural histories, and assessment of their practices and activities, at least in regard to their generic features. Unless the pupil's practice is a *counting* practice, it cannot be an alternative to ours. His practice being circumscribed within his form of life is unintelligible to us. But that he is counting the steps in a series of numbers ought to be perfectly clear to us in order for Wittgenstein to have his conclusion. The pupil is rational in his activity and his rationality even spills over to our world. Let us fasten on this concept of rationality.

Since for Wittgenstein the limits of our thought and language are determined by the facts of our natural history, it would be natural to suppose that the concept of rationality would be for him circumscribed within each form of life. If the concept of rationality is thus circumscribed, it is difficult to see how a critique across forms of life in terms of a uniform criterion of rationality is possible. Wittgenstein might of course retort: who needs a criterion of rationality here? "To use the word without a justification does not mean to use it wrongfully" (RFM V 33), to extend Wittgenstein's observation on identity to rationality. But this will not do. What Wittgenstein says might be true. We may be unable to formulate a criterion of rationality, but the term 'rational' and its cognates may have a legitimate use. Formulating a criterion or definition of rationality, or for that matter of any concept, is a particular exercise of the concept and is not equivalent to the having of the concept.<sup>3</sup> But what is in question here is a possible communication across forms of life in terms of the concept of rationality, and the forms of life must so far agree as to permit this. One might say that it is human agreement that decides what is right or wrong in such cases. Since we are concerned with an

use of 'rational' valid across forms of life, such agreement must cut across forms of life in order to be a basis for such use. What is agreed upon might be stated as at least a necessary condition which any form of life would have to satisfy in order to be permitted a rightful use of 'rational'. But this is just one step away from Frege, for whom the necessary condition in question would have to be regarded as objective, and independent of human agreement or form of life.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "PI" refers to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (Third Edition, Macmillan): "RFM" will refer to *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (M.I.T. paper back, 1967).
2. Barry Stroud, "Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity", *Essays on Wittgenstein* (ed. E. D. Klemke, University of Illinois Press, 1971) pp. 460-461.
3. P. T. Geach, *Mental Acts* (Routledge, 1960) p. 44.

# ANALYTICITY IN THE OBSERVATION LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE

PRABHATI DAS

## I

Normally in the context of framing and establishing hypotheses in empirical sciences, particularly in natural sciences, observation sentences play a significant role. The formulation of a hypothesis and its confirmation depend upon, and are to some extent conditioned by, certain observational data.

One of the major tasks of a scientist is to explain facts and phenomena of nature. In other words, scientists formulate hypothesis in order to give a possible explanation for the occurrence of a given phenomenon, or the relation between any two phenomena, or for the particular behaviour of a phenomenon, or a group of phenomena. This possible explanation takes the form of hypothesis which is said to throw light on the particular problem concerned. In this pursuit, the scientist prefers to start with observation leading to various hypotheses as possible explanations of the facts under investigation.

Since the concept of observation has a great bearing in the context of hypothesis, (framing and confirming) let us discuss the nature of observation sentences in general.

Our perceptual experience is expressed in terms of certain observation report. An observation report contains certain data which are accessible to the method of direct observation. In order to define the concept of observation report Hempel<sup>1</sup> has suggested: let there be a well-determined language of science in terms of which all sentences, hypotheses as well as evidence sentences are constructed. This language further

contains a clearly determined 'observational vocabulary'. The terms included in the observational vocabulary refer to directly and publicly observable features of objects—features whose presence or absence can be decided, under suitable conditions, by direct observations. Terms designating more or less directly observable attributes of things or events, such as "red," "smaller than," "burning with a yellow light" thus come under the observational vocabulary.

By an observation report we normally understand a conjunction of a finite class of observation sentences; and an observation sentence is taken as a sentence which asserts or denies that a specified object, or a group of objects of macroscopic size has a particular observable attribute, i.e., an attribute whose presence or absence can, under suitable circumstances, be ascertained by direct observation (e.g. 'a is a raven,' 'b is not black' etc.) or that a given sequence of objects stands in a certain observable relation (e.g. 'A is to the north of B').

Observation sentences of this kind bear a close affinity with Carnap's formulation of "thing-language"<sup>2</sup>. According to Carnap the intersubjective<sup>3</sup> testing procedure used in natural sciences as well as in large areas of common sense level is possible only if the data of such empirical tests are formulated in terms of physicalistic thing-language.

However, the concept of observation is relative to the techniques of observation used. Hempel has drawn our attention to the fact that what is unobservable to the unaided senses may well be observed through suitable devices, such as telescopes, polariscopes, lie detectors etc. Therefore, if observability is understood in this broader sense, in terms of the use of certain mechanical devices, then along with terms like "trees," "stones," etc., the concept of observable attributes becomes more comprehensive comprising such terms as atoms, magnetic, electric and a variety of sub-atomic particles.

In order to distinguish between these two senses of 'observables,' Carnap<sup>3</sup> has drawn a distinction between philosopher's sense of 'observables' and scientist's sense of 'observables.' The philosopher's use of the term is restricted to such directly perceptible properties of the senses, e.g., "blue," "hard," "hot." To a scientist the word 'observable' includes "any quantitative magnitude that can be measured in a relatively simple, direct way."<sup>4</sup> Thus whereas the temperature of 80 degrees centigrade, or a weight of 93 pounds are perfectly counted by the scientists as examples of observables, the lack of direct sensory attributes corresponding to these magnitudes makes them non-observables to a philosopher. The scientist and the philosopher, thus, would agree on the point that the mass of a molecule, or the mass of an electron, does not constitute what is observable because the procedure of measurement is extremely complicated and indirect here, but the measurement of temperature with a thermometer, or length with a ruler is considered by the scientists as what is 'observable' due to the simplicity of the procedure involved.

To sum up. In the context of the scientific test of a given hypothesis, usually certain specified techniques of observation are accepted; the observational vocabulary contains terms designating properties and relations by means of these accepted techniques. An observation sentence is then defined simply as a sentence affirming or denying that a given object, or a sequence of objects, possesses one of those observable attributes.

Since the observational vocabulary constitutes a part of the whole "language of science," the logical structure of this language in turn determines the logical form of sentences that belong to the observational vocabulary. In characterizing the logical structure of such a 'language of science,' Hempel<sup>5</sup> tells us that all sentences of the language are

formed exclusively by means of predicate constants, individual constants, individual variables, universal and existential quantifiers for individual variables, and the connected symbols of denial, conjunction, alternation and implication. However he forbids the use of predicate variables and that of the identity sign. Moreover, the predicate constants exclusively refer to observable attributes.

On the basis of this stipulation as to the logical structure of the language of science, Hempel goes on to characterize an observation report "as a conjunction of sentences of the kind illustrated by 'P (a),' 'P (b),' 'R (c, d),' 'R (e, f),' etc.,"<sup>6</sup> where 'P,' 'R,' refer to observational properties and relations respectively ; 'a,' 'b,' 'c,' 'd,' 'e,' 'f,' etc. are individual names of specific objects.

## II

Usually an observation sentence is regarded as synthetic, since it is empirical in origin and is as such contingent. But there is a controversy as to whether all observation sentences or sentences having empirical origin are by definition contingent or synthetic. Philosophers who are interested in the logical form of sentences have pointed out the analytic character of observation sentences with the result that not all such sentences are synthetic. Carnap, for example, maintains that almost all working scientists would agree that the analytic-synthetic distinction in observation language is a very useful one. Analyticity in a language does not mean that the sentences of such a language are factually empty. A factually non-empty sentence which is, in addition, analytic will help the scientists in predicting the future laws of nature with greater precision and accuracy.

In the scientific pursuit, to establish absolute certainty of empirical statements (observation sentences) a transition from 'synthetic' to 'analytic' appears to be indispensable. Such a

transition from 'synthetic' to 'analytic' may be regarded as a transition from 'well-established' and 'well-confirmed' empirical generalizations to linguistic conventions which obtain their unrestricted validity in view of their being analytical and tautologous.<sup>7</sup> To show how an observation sentence holds good for unobserved cases is to depend upon its analyticity. The apparently empirical and consequently synthetic statements claiming their unfailing applicability to future unobserved cases (which is one of the main pursuits of the scientists) shows the importance of the transition from apparently synthetic observation statements to their real analytic character.

To illustrate this point Von Wright has shown how an inductively arrived generalization may be turned out to be an absolutely certain analytic statement. Thus the generalization "phosphorus melts at 44°c" was originally formed out of experiments and as such was synthetic. But in the course of investigation this property of melting at 44°c which originally was an observed empirical property of phosphorus, was made the standard for making out what is phosphorus and what is not. This is evident from the fact that the scientists are not ready to sacrifice this statement about phosphorus in the face of any contrary experience. Thus, if a certain substance known as phosphorus fails to exhibit the further property of 'melting at 44°c,' then instead of discarding the statement 'phosphorus melts at 44°c' the scientists would prefer to choose the other alternative and would say that perhaps the chosen substance is not a piece of phosphorus at all. In this way the scientists save the truth of the inductively established generalization by making it analytical.

The definition of analyticity may be said to owe its origin to Kant, who holds that a statement is analytic where the concept embodied in the subject term already 'contains' the concept embodied in the predicate term, and thus, the



predicate concept does not say anything new but only 'explicates' the subject term.

In the '*Critique of Pure Reason*' Kant states the distinction in the following manner: "In all judgments in which the relation of a subject to the predicate is thought, this relation is possible in two different ways. Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A as something which is (covertly) contained in this concept A or B lies outside the concept A, although it does indeed stand in connection with it. In the one case I entitle the judgement analytic, in the other synthetic."

However, in '*Prolegomena*' Kant draws the distinction in a slightly different way: He writes "But whatever the origin of judgements and whatever the kind of their logical form, there is a difference between them as to their content, according to which they are either explanatory and add nothing to the content of knowledge, or enlarging in that they increase the given knowledge; the former can be called analytic judgements, the latter synthetic judgments.....analytic judgments say nothing in the predicate that was not already thought in the concept of the subject, though not so clearly and with equal consciousness."

This shows that the analytic-synthetic distinction is drawn regarding the content of statements and from the formulation in '*Prolegomena*' it clearly follows that such a distinction is not restricted to any special kind of statements, but is applicable to any statement whatsoever.

### [ A ]

Before entering into the discussion on analyticity it seems pertinent to evaluate the historically important but allegedly incorrect treatment of the notion.

The term 'containment' is, according to Quine, 'metaphorical' and is thus philosophically vague. If a 'concept' is taken in the sense of what is denoted by the term, then it may be seen that the reverse is sometimes the case. For instance, in the statement 'man is an animal' the class of animal is wider than that of man and so the reverse relation of containment holds. Again, in the statement 'man is a rational animal' the idea of containment is futile because the two classes of 'man' and of 'rational animal' coincide. Thus analyticity in the sense of containment is useless. Moreover, if 'concept' is taken in the connotative sense, then what is taken into consideration is only the 'meaning' where the idea of containment is an unjustified approach. Because in the statement 'man is a rational animal' the concepts of 'man' and 'rational animal' are used on the basis of their meaning which is unique and unanalysable, and as meanings without any reference to what is meant, the concepts will remain unrelated and thus analyticity vanishes. So either way we proceed, it will be seen that Kant's observations leads us to philosophical vagueness.<sup>8,1</sup>

In this respect Erik Stenius's<sup>9</sup> appraisal of the Kantian distinction deserves special mention. According to him the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements refers to the content of knowledge, and should be treated as a semantic distinction—a point which has already been appreciated by Quine<sup>10</sup> and others.

Stenius's real venture is in characterizing the conditions fulfilled by the Kantian notion of analyticity. Firstly, analytic statements do not "increase our knowledge"; this follows from the fact that the predicate concept of an analytic statement is obtained by an analysis of the subject concept, and hence was already contained in the subject concept. By the present-day philosophers this is what is called 'factually empty'. Kant's typical example 'bodies are extended' is

analytic, because 'being extended' is semantically contained in 'being body', and thus does not add to our knowledge. The same is not, however, true of 'bodies are heavy' where 'heaviness' is an addition to the concept of body, and thus the statement is synthetic.

Secondly, Kant has remarked that an analytic statement is nothing but an explication of the subject-concept, i.e. it makes explicit what is implicitly contained in the subject concept. So, whenever we try to negate an analytic statement, we inevitably violate the law of contradiction. Consequently all analytic statements are governed by the law of contradiction.

The intended definition of analyticity in terms of the law of contradiction is allegedly circular in the sense that the law of contradiction itself presupposes analyticity. In other words, a statement is analytic the denial of which is self-contradictory and a statement satisfies the law of contradiction which is itself analytic. In the words of Quine "the two notions are the two sides of a single dubious coin." [TDE]<sup>11</sup>

The main lines of criticism of the supposed distinction between analytic and synthetic statements<sup>12</sup> as offered by Quine can be summed up under two heads:

(1) Firstly, any definition of 'analytic' in terms of such problematic expressions as 'meaning,' 'definition,' 'synonymous,' and 'necessary' has little explanatory value.

(2) Secondly, that a definition of analytic in terms of certain semantical rules<sup>13</sup> is arbitrary, providing no real ground for the application of the term 'analytic' to a particular class of sentences.

Before taking up further details let us clarify the key-points of Quine's theory of analytic statements.

Quine explains the analytic statement as that which by putting "synonyms for synonyms" can be transformed into

a logical truth.<sup>14</sup> Thus "no bachelor is married" can be turned into logical truth, if we substitute the term 'bachelor' by its synonym 'unmarried man.' This shows that besides the meaning of the logical particles 'no' and 'is' an understanding of the meaning of the descriptive terms is needed in order to find out the analyticity of such statements. Since such a definition of analytic statements rests on the notion of 'synonymy,' Quine seeks to further clarify such a notion.

It is said that two linguistic forms are taken to be synonymous by virtue of definitions. Thus the term 'man' is synonymous with the term 'rational-animal' because 'man' is defined in terms of 'rational-animal.' Pursuing this enquiry if we then ask what is the ground of such a definition? We find that the lexicographer defines the term 'man' as 'rational-animal,' or the term 'optician' 'eye-doctor' because the relation of synonymy between these pairs of words is already existent in usage. A lexicographer is an empirical scientist whose task is to record facts of experience. Thus definitions based on prior relation of synonymy cannot be taken as the ground of it. Definition by itself cannot tell us the sufficient and necessary conditions that any two linguistic expressions must satisfy in order to be synonymous. Quine then abandons the notion of definition as useless and looks somewhere else for the alleged ground of synonymy.

Quine next considers the suggestion according to which the synonymy of two linguistic expressions rests on their interchangeability in all contexts without change of truth value—in Leibniz's sense, interchangeability 'salva veritate.' Such interchangeability, however is not allowed within words. Thus 'unmarried' cannot be substituted in place 'bachelor' in 'bachelor of arts' which is taken as a single word. The question is, (a) whether interchangeability is a sufficient

condition for explaining the notion of synonymy and thus of analyticity, or (b) whether it can be shown that two linguistic expressions which are not synonymous are nevertheless interchangeable within a special universe of discourse. If the second alternative (b) can be shown to be possible, the notion of interchangeability loses its relevance in the present context. By 'synonymy' Quine is obviously speaking of 'cognitive synonymy', the type of synonymy which is required in order to transform an analytic statement into a logical truth.

That interchangeability is a sufficient condition for cognitive synonymy Quine shows by the following example :

(a) Necessarily all and only bachelors are bachelors.

This statement is evidently true according to the law of identity ; however, the application of the term 'necessarily' is restricted to cases of analytic statements only. If 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' are interchangeable '*salva veritate*' then the statement

(b) necessarily all and only bachelors are unmarried  
men

(by putting 'unmarried men' for 'bachelors' in [a]) is also true. This amounts to saying that the statement 'all and only bachelors are unmarried men' is analytic ; and hence that 'bachelor' and 'unmarried men' are cognitively synonymous.

The above definition of cognitive synonymy in terms of the adverb 'necessarily' as applicable only to analytic statements presupposes the notion of analyticity rather than explaining it.

Quine's point is that within an extensional language whose extent is specified regarding its descriptive and logical vocabulary, interchangeability '*salva veritate*' means : 'any two predicates which agree extensionally (that

is, are true of the same objects) are interchangeable 'salva veritate' [TDE]. But such interchangeability, in an extensional language, does not give us any guarantee that the synonymy of 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' is based on meaning or intention of the terms, rather than on purely accidental matters of fact. The extensional agreement of 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' establishes no more than that "all and only bachelors are unmarried man" is true; but it cannot establish the analyticity of such a statement.

Quine concludes that interchangeability 'salva veritate' in relation to an extensional language does not provide a sufficient basis for cognitive synonymy, for deriving analyticity from it afterwards. However in a language containing the intensional adverb 'necessarily' the meaning of cognitive synonymy is well-founded, but such a language is intelligible only by a prior appeal to the notion of analyticity in terms of the adverb 'necessarily'.

Quine now speaks of the more fundamental type of analytic statements which are logically true. A statement is logically true if it is true exclusively by virtue of the meanings of the logical particles occurring in it, which means that the statement remains true under all reinterpretations of its components other than the logical particles. Elsewhere<sup>18</sup> Quine has remarked that "the logical truths are those true sentences which involve only logical words essentially. What this means is that any other words, though they may also occur in a logical truth (as witness 'Brutus', 'Kill', and 'Caesar' in 'Brutus Killed or did not kill Caesar'), can be varied at will without engendering falsity". As example, Quine cites

'No unmarried man is married' [TDE]

It may be asked how one know that it is logically true. Stenius<sup>19</sup> raises this relevant question and proceeds

further to ask : Is a logical truth based upon experiments made for different interpretations of the predicates 'Mx' and 'Sx' in

$$(x) (Mx. Sx = Mx)$$

and the observation that the statements arrived at in this way are always true (or confirmed)<sup>17</sup> ? He himself prefers to reply in the negative.

[ B ]

In clarifying Quine's observation on the notion of logical truths, Stenius himself takes up the task of elucidating what a 'logical truth' actually means in the context of analyticity of statements.

According to Stenius all logical truths are analytic and this he accepts as the possible outcome of the Kantian view.

He enumerates three ways of characterizing analytic statements one of which consists of what is called 'logical truth' :

A (I) The factual content of analytic statements is empty.

A (II) An analytic statement is seen to be true on the basis of an analysis of the concepts it contains—we could say a semantic analysis of the symbols it contains.

A (III) All logical truths are analytic.

Stenius's real intention is to derive the interdependence of these three characteristics of analytic statements. In this pursuit, he starts with Von Wright's<sup>18</sup> treatment of the problem.

Von Wright defines the concept of analyticity in the following way :

B (II) A sentence is called analytic when its truths follows from the meanings of the words it contains.

B (I) Analytic judgments do not enlarge our knowledge but concern exclusively the sphere of language.

That B(I) is a consequence of B(II), hence A(I) of A(II), is shown by Von Wright by the following example :

The sentence

(1) 'Iron is a metal'

may be symbolically expressed as

(2)  $(x) (Ix \supset Mx)$

The sentence can be considered analytic if besides the other characteristics of iron, the condition 'being a metal' ( $Mx$ ) is included in the definition of iron. Stated symbolically the definition of iron becomes

(3)  $Ix = \text{def. } Mx \ \& \ Sx$  (where  $Sx$  stands for the other conditions of iron)

With the help of this definition we can transform (2) into

(4)  $(Mx. Sx \supset Mx)$ .

(4) is again a conjunction of singular sentences of the form

(5)  $(Ma. Sa) \supset Ma$

(where 'a' is the name of an individual) which is a tautology in the propositional logic. Thus as a conjunction of tautologies (4) is factually empty, and since (4) is a reformulation of (3), (2) is also factually empty.<sup>19</sup>

The relation between B(II) and B(I) is explicitly stated by Von Wright in the following reformulation :

By an analytic sentence we understand a sentence which by such substitutions as do not change its meaning, is transformed into a tautology in the sense of propositional logic.

The shortcoming of Von Wright's formulation is pointed out by Stenius, is that it cannot explain the analyticity of such sentences, like

'No objects are both red (all over) and blue (all over).'

The analyticity of such sentences are not dependent on their tautological character, rather on certain semantic fact concerning the colours red and blue. That analyticity has an



independent meaning without reducibility to truth-functional tautologies becomes evident from the following example :

If A is greater than B, and B is greater than C, then  
A is greater than C.

By way of discussing the problem of interdependence of the three characteristics of analyticity with reference to Von Wright's formulation, Stenius proceeds to offer his own view on this problem of analyticity.

So far we have seen that A (I) follows from A (II). But now Stenius points out that A (I) follows both from A (II) and A (III), that is, all logical truths are analytic in the sense of A (I) (factually empty). The analyticity of a sentence, e.g. 'Iron is a metal' is shown first by an analysis of the meaning of 'Iron' (AII) with the help of which such a sentence is transformed into a logical truth. Then by using the method of truth-table Von Wright shows that the factual content of a logical truth is empty. Thus, properly speaking, logical truths would be analytic in the sense of A (I) and not in the sense of A (II). This leads us to pass on to two formulations of analytic truths :

D (I) The factual content of analytic sentences is empty. Logical truths are analytic in this sense.

D (II) An analytic sentence is true on the basis of the semantic analysis of the symbol it contains.

According to Stenius, strictly speaking, logical truths should not be called analytic, logical truths are called analytic because of their role in establishing the analyticity of such sentences like 'Iron is a metal'.

Next an attempt has been made by Stenius to reconcile these two formulations of analyticity by elaborating an argument of Von Wright himself. For this purpose what is required to be done is to show that logical truths of

propositional logic are after all analytic in the sense of A(II). Let us take a typical formula of logical truth which is a tautology, e.g.

$$p \supset (p \vee q)$$

The tautological character of the above formula is seen by a joint application of the truth-tables for implication and disjunction, which gives the value true to every possible combination of  $p$  and  $q$ . The formula then is a tautology in the sense that it is true whatever be the case, i.e., its truth is not dependent on factual considerations.

Here Stenius raises the question : how do we know that the truth-tables are the correct method for determining the truth-values of conjunction, disjunction, implication and other logical connectives? To this, Von Wright replies that the truth-tables for the different logical connectives constitute a kind of definitions for those connectives. Thus in a truth-table for the conjunction ' $p \cdot q$ ' we assign the value true only when both the conjuncts are true, this is because we have accepted that the sign ' $\cdot$ ' in propositional logic should be used in this way. This is true for other logical connectives. This definitional character of truth-tables are often overlooked due to the fact that the truth-tables do not constitute 'eliminative definitions,' they rather constitute what Stenius calls 'ostensive definitions.'

If the truth-tables thus constitute definitions for the logical connectives, then we can say that the logical formula ' $p \supset (p \vee q)$ ' is shown to be a tautology by an analysis of the meanings of the symbols 'or' and 'implies'. This shows that the A (II) formulation of analyticity applies to logical truths as well. From this we can conclude that the different characteristics of analytic sentences are not isolated from one another, rather they focus on different aspects about the same concept of analyticity. The final formulation of analytic statement as accepted by Stenius is :

A statement is analytic, if and only if, according to the semantic conventions for certain of the symbols it contains, it is true (in the intensional sense) whatever be the case.

With the help of this definition of analytic statements Stenius explains the analyticity of such sentences like "no objects are both red (all over) and blue (all over)" in the following way: By a semantic analysis of the meaning of the words 'blue' and 'red' we come to know that an object which is called 'red' should not be called 'blue' and versa.<sup>20</sup> This semantic consideration along with a knowledge of the symbol "no" is a sufficient condition for explaining the analyticity of the above sentence. A further reduction to a truth-function tautology, as stated by Von Wright, is therefore unnecessary.<sup>21</sup>

At this point Stenius goes back to the issue raised in connection with the observation of Quine. He argues that Quine, unlike Von Wright, believes that the logical truths in the predicate logic are not 'tautological' or 'factually empty' in the sense of propositional logic. Though the logical truths, like "No unmarried men are married" are true because of the logical particles, this fact is not enough to establish their non-factual character. On the contrary, as Stenius puts "They are very general truths but otherwise in no way different from, for instance, natural laws."<sup>22</sup> The factual content of logical truths are empty in the sense that their truth is not determined by factual considerations; still they are not exactly non-factual due to the occurrence of descriptive terms in them.

The attitude which Quine, in the opinion of Stenius, appears to have followed, is that

$$(Ma \ \& \ Sa) \supset Ma$$

where 'a' denotes a fixed individual, is a tautology on the basis of definition of the logical connectives. Since '(Ma.Sa) $\supset$ Ma' is a tautology only by the logic of the

connectives without any reference to the predicate symbols 'Mx' and 'Sx' therefore it remains a tautology and therefore remains true by any reinterpretation of these predicates.

Moreover, the tautological character of ' $(Ma.Sa \supset Ma)$ ' is independent of the denotation of 'a'. This Stenius expresses by saying that the 'complex-predicate' ' $Mx.Sx \supset Mx$ ' which is predicated of all individuals does not actually attribute anything to any individual, it is a 'tautological predicate.' Finally, ' $(x) (Ix \supset Mx)$ ' is seen to be a tautology by an 'analysis' of the use of the universal operator. This analysis shows that the following convention is valid for the use of universal quantifier :

"If  $F(x)$  is a tautological predicate, then the sentence  
 $(x) F(x)$  is true whatever be the case, that is, is tautological."

This is used as a convention about the truth-conditions of universal sentences and about the meaning of the universal quantifier.

### [ III ]

Turning our attention from ordinary language to the language of science, we see that the analytic-synthetic distinction plays an important role which will throw light on our analysis and interpretation of observation sentences. This point has been brought to our notice by Carnap.<sup>23</sup>

According to Carnap, terms of scientific discourse are divided into three main groups : (1) Logical terms (2) Observation terms or O-terms (3) Theoretical terms or T-terms.<sup>24</sup>

Similar divisions can be made with reference to sentences in the language of science. (1) Logical sentences which contain no descriptive terms,<sup>25</sup> for example, 'For every object x and every property F, if x is an F then x is an F.'

(2) Observation sentences which contain O-terms but no T-terms. (3) Theoretical sentences which contain T-terms with or without O-terms.

Corresponding to these divisions, the entire language of science is then divided into two parts: each contains the whole of logic differing only with respect to their descriptive, non-logical elements.

(1) The observation language or  $L_o$ , containing logical sentences and observation sentences but no T-terms.

(2) The theoretical language or  $L_r$  containing logical sentences and theoretical sentences (with or without O-terms).

With this background<sup>26</sup>, Carnap goes on to draw the distinction between analytic and synthetic truths<sup>27</sup> in observation language.

Like Quine, Carnap also accepts two kinds of analytic truth. The first kind of analytic truth is called the logical truth or L-truth which we have already explained in connection with our discussion of the views of Quine.

As regards the second kind of analytic truths Carnap tells us that observation language contains sentences which are analytic in a much wider sense of the term than merely L-true. Such truths are embodied in sentences which contain both logical and descriptive terms, and the truth or falsity of such sentences cannot be determined unless, over and above the meanings of the logical terms, the meanings of the descriptive terms are also understood. The two kinds of analytic truths are exemplified by the following two sentences:

1. Fido is black or Fido is not black.
2. If Jack is a bachelor then he is not married.

In order to understand these two statements no knowledge of extra-linguistic facts is needed. However, to ascertain the

truth of (1) only the meanings of the logical particles are required. For (2), on the other hand, the meaning of some descriptive words, e.g., 'bachelor' and 'married' are involved.<sup>28</sup>

The truth or falsity of a synthetic statement, on the contrary, is determined not by the meanings of the terms occurring in it, but by certain factual information about the world. Thus the statement 'moon is blue' is true if the moon is blue, and false if it is otherwise. A synthetic statement has 'factual content' in the sense that its truth or falsity is decided through some empirical tests regarding the nature of the world.

In a natural language<sup>29</sup> where the semantical rules<sup>30</sup> are not well constructed it is not possible to give a clear-cut meaning to every word for every person; in which cases the decision as to the analyticity or syntheticity of sentences containing ambiguous words remains open.

However, with reference to an artificial language where the meaning-relations among the various descriptive terms of the language are clearly specified, the task is not so difficult. Such rules specifying the meaning-relation is called by Carnap meaning-postulates or A-postulates. A complete specification of the meanings of all the descriptive terms of an artificial language could be given, but that would be, as Carnap himself confesses, a rather irksome job. Thus in an artificial language, we can specify the meaning of the words 'animal', 'man' and 'Indian' either by giving a complete list of all the properties of the terms which will be rather painstaking, or we can simply specify certain A-postulates specifying the meaning-relations among the descriptive terms. For example, the A-postulates for the above three terms can be formulated:

A<sub>1</sub> All men are animals.

A<sub>2</sub> All Indians are men.

such A-postulates are much similar providing a sufficient

basis for the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements in a language. Thus, let us suppose, in a language we want to decide whether or not a given sentence, e.g., 'a triangle has three angles' is analytic.

In most cases, in a natural language, the A-postulates are obtained by consulting an ordinary English dictionary. Thus if the dictionary definition of triangle tells us that 'a triangle is a figure bounded by three straight lines and has three angles' then the above sentence, e.g. 'a triangle has three angles' is A-true by virtue of the A-postulate: 'If x is a triangle then x has three angles' which in its turn is derived from the definition of triangle. It is not necessary to draw an actual triangle and to go through the empirical test of counting its angles in order to determine its truth.

In an artificial language, as Carnap holds, the task of specifying the A-postulates are done by fiat. Thus in an artificial language, based on the natural language of English, if rationality and animality are taken to constitute the essential meaning components of the word 'man', then, from this we can derive two A-postulates: 'Man is rational' and 'Man is animal'. By consulting these A-postulates we can say that 'man is a rational animal' is analytically true or A-true. What Carnap intends to show here is, is that instead of saying 'man is a rational animal' is A-true because the concepts of rationality and animality are contained may be supplied in the concept of man, an alternative step in the form of certain A-postulates. However, if the term 'man' is interpreted differently so that certain physical features, e.g. 'featherlessness' and 'bipedity' are taken as its essential meaning components, then the sentence 'man is a rational animal' loses its analyticity.


The essential point Carnap makes is that the analyticity of a sentence is determined by the A-postulates of a language which refer to certain meaning-relations among the descriptive

terms of the language. To the extent the list of these A-postulates is precise, the distinction between analytic and synthetic becomes clear. Where the A-postulates are unprecise due to the vagueness of the descriptive terms of the language, confusions seem to arise, not regarding our understanding of the *distinction* between analytic and synthetic statements, but regarding our *decision* as to the analyticity or syntheticity of a particular sentence in the language.

Carnap, however, reminds us that the A-postulates do not tell us anything about the nature of the world; they are concerned solely with the meanings of the descriptive words of a language.

The merit of Carnap's theory rests on the point that it avoids certain difficulties present in the Kantian formulation of analytic and synthetic statements. By formulating the A-postulates specifying meaning-relations among the descriptive terms, which in their turn are derived from 'essential meaning components', Carnap shows that the analytic statements are not of the trivial kind of statements like 'A is A'. He is also able to avoid the charge of circularity against the notion of analyticity. If one tries to explain the notion of analyticity in terms of definitions then one can never avoid the charge of circularity as pointed out by Quine. But by formulating certain rules in the form of A-postulates, Carnap succeeds in deriving the analyticity of statements without however being involved circularity. Once the A-postulates are formulated they seem to work as rules for the determination of analyticity; so that if a statement follows from any one of these rules, it becomes analytic, otherwise not.

On this point one can question, along with Quine, the ultimate tenability of such a distinction between analytic and synthetic statements. As we have already mentioned earlier, according to Quine's definition of analytic statements





in terms of certain semantical rules is useless providing no real ground for our understanding of the term 'analytic.'

Carnap holds that due to the vagueness of ordinary language it is difficult to make a clear distinction between analytic and synthetic truths in a natural language. But the distinction is clear in an artificial language where the rules governing the use of the expressions are precise in terms of certain 'semantical rules.'

Quine points out that the notion of analyticity stands for a relation between statements and language, that is, a *S* is said to be analytic for a language *L*, and the problem is to make sense of this relation generally for any '*S*' and '*L*.' Quine holds that the problem does not lose its graveness even if we restrict the range of *L* to an artificial language *L*. At this point Quine explicitly refers to Carnap's treatment of the notion of analyticity in terms of certain semantical rules. In an artificial language with the help of certain semantical rules a complete specification of all the analytic statements are given. The rules tell us that such and such statements are analytic. Quine's objection to this is that "the rules contain the word 'analytic' which we do not understand. We understand what expression the rules attribute analyticity to, but we do not understand what the rules attribute to these expressions. In short, before we can understand a rule which begins 'A statement *S* is analytic for language *L* if and only if ....' we must understand the general relative terms 'analytic for'; we must understand '*S* is analytic for *L*' where '*S*' and '*L*' are variables."<sup>30</sup>

Alternatively, we may treat the rule as a conventional definition of the symbol 'analytic-for-*L*' which might be expressed by the word '*K*'. However, the rule by itself cannot tell us why *K* is chosen as the class of 'analytic' statements rather than some other class *M*, *N*, etc. Quine's

objection here is with regard to the word 'analytic'. The fact that a statement is true by virtue of certain semantical rules does not illuminate the point of its being called by the name 'analytic'.

Next, Quine passes on to the second form of semantical rule which, instead of saying that such and such statements are analytic, merely says that such and such statements are included among the truths, and as we all know, analytic statements are supposed to be the class of true statements. Such a rule does not contain the 'un-understood' word 'analytic'. Let us suppose, Quine continues, for the sake of argument that the word 'true' is harmless. A semantical rule of this second form does not specify all the truths of the language, but it specifies only a multitude of true statements. Analyticity, afterwards, may be derived by demarcating 'that a statement is analytic if it is (not merely true but) true according to the semantical rule'.

Quine's remark is that "instead of appealing to an unexplained word 'analytic,' we are now appealing to an unexplained phrase 'semantical rule' "and this latter word is as much in need of clarification, at least, as 'analytic-for'." (TDE)

Quine further considers the possibility of comparing the notion of semantical rule with that of postulates in order to show, in the end, that even such a comparison fails to improve the situation. The word 'postulate,' according to Quine, is significant only relative to an act of enquiry where a set of postulates is taken as the starting point and by applying certain rules of transformation, some further statements are arrived at which are considered relevant in the field of enquiry. In the same spirit it can be said that a given set of semantical rules functions as postulates for the purpose of schooling the unfamiliar notion of truth-conditions of statements of some natural or artificial language L. On this point, Quine

comments "But from this point of view no one signalization of a subclass of the truths of L is intrinsically more a semantical rule than another; and, if 'analytic' means 'true by semantical rules,' no one truth of L is analytic to the exclusion of another" (TDE).

Though Quine has not dealt here with all forms of explanation of analyticity as offered by Carnap, he however, believes that his main arguments are strong enough to deal with other forms only with some relevant alteration. He closes the chapter with this lamentation "semantical rules determining the analytic statements of an artificial language are of interest only in so far as we already understand the notion of analyticity; they are of no help in gaining this understanding." (TDE)

Carnap is well aware of the adverse comments put forth by Quine and others. But he hastens to reply to the objections in the following way: He<sup>31</sup> first considers Quine's important argument directed against his concept of analyticity as a semantical concept. To this he replies that in a formalized language system L, he has explicated the concept of analyticity always with reference to the semantical rules in the form of A-postulates. Quine's objection is with respect to the semantical rules which are, in his view, recognizable only by the heading "Semantical Rules" which itself is meaningless. This remark is rather surprising since it is an obvious fact that "the admitted forms of sentences of a formalized language L are only recognizable by a label like "Sentence Forms in L" preceding a list of forms of expressions, or the fact that the axioms of a logical calculus are only recognizable by the label "Axioms."<sup>32</sup> The objection raised against "Semantical Rules" is, thus applicable, by the same logic to the above cases which are, however, unquestionably accepted by Quine himself.<sup>33</sup>

Carnap<sup>34</sup> further discusses in detail how, in the framework of a formalized semantical system, the concept of analyticity can be explicated by using A-postulates. The semantical language system  $L$  contains the customary connectives, individual variable with quantifiers and as descriptive signs individual constants ( $a, b, c$ , etc.) and primitive descriptive predicates (e.g. 'B' and 'M' for 'bachelor' and 'married' respectively).

In such a system  $L_0$ , wherever a logical relation holds among the meanings of the primitive descriptive predicates (e.g. incompatibility between 'bachelor' and 'married man' in "No bachelors are married") or whenever a certain structural property characterizes a two-or-more-place primitive predicate of  $L_0$  by virtue of its meaning (e.g. the relation 'warmen' is asymmetric and transitive) then these relations and properties are embodied in the form of A-postulates. Thus the statement "No bachelors are married" requires the meaning-postulate of the following form :

$$P_1 \quad (x) (Bx \supset \sim Mx)$$

The postulate  $P_1$  merely states that the logical relation of incompatibility holds between the intended meanings of the primitive predicates 'B' and 'M' and the analyticity of the statement is derived from this A-postulate.

Corresponding to the structural properties of transitivity and irreflexivity of the relational predicate 'Warmen' we get two A-postulates :

$$(a) \quad '(x) (y) (z) (Wxz.Wyz \supset Wxz)'$$

$$(b) \quad '(x) \sim Wxx'$$

In relation to these A-postulates, the statement

$$(c) \quad '(x) (y) (Wxy \supset \sim Wyx)'$$
 is A-true.

The laying down of postulates is, according to Carnap, not a matter of knowledge but of decision. "...Thus we see that it cannot be the task of the logician to prescribe to

those who construct systems what postulates they ought to take. They are free to choose their postulates, guided not by their beliefs concerning facts of the world but by their intentions with respect to the meanings, i.e., the ways of use of the descriptive constants."<sup>35</sup>

In a formal way Carnap explicates the concept of analyticity for a language system  $L$  where  $B$  is the conjunction of all the meaning-postulates accepted in  $L$ . Carnap uses for the explicatum the term ' $L$ -true with respect to  $B$ ' and defines it as follows :

(I) A statement  $C_1$  in  $L$  is ' $L$ -true with respect to  $B$ ' = Df.  $C_1$  is  $L$ -implied by  $B$  (in  $L$ ).

Alternatively,

Let  $L$  be the original system without meaning postulates. The system  $L'$  is constructed out of  $L$  by adding the meaning postulates  $B$ .

(II)  $C_1$  is  $L$ -ture in  $L' =$  Df.  $C_1$  is  $L$ -implied by  $B$  in  $L$ .

Carnap confesses that the situation is however different in the case of natural languages where no explicit semantical rules in the form of  $A$ -postulates are usually found. In a natural language, according to Carnap, the explication of the concept of analyticity is done by determining the intensions of predicates. So the question is : How can the linguist go beyond this (extension) and determine also its (predicate's) intension ?"<sup>36</sup>

The pragmatic determination of intension of a predicate by studying the linguistic behaviour of people of a certain culture present difficulties. On the basis of such an empirical procedure two linguists may completely agree as to the extension of a predicate within a given region ; still they may differ regarding the intension of the predicate.

The intensionalist thesis in Pragmatics, which Carnap defends, holds that the assignment of an intension is an empirical hypothesis which like any other hypothesis in linguistics can be tested by observation of language behaviour.

The extensionalist thesis, on the other hand, says (Quine seems to have accepted it) that the assignment of an intension on the basis of a previously determined extension is not a matter of fact but of choice.

So far Carnap has discussed the problem of determining intension in a simple, pre-scientific language. The situation is not totally different for the language of science. The only difference is that in the latter there is the additional fact that it contains some explicitly stated conventions for some of its special symbols. The degree of precision of such a language is generally higher than everyday language; consequently the intensional concepts are applicable with greater clarity.

This shows that the procedure for testing a hypothesis concerning the intension of a predicate is empirical for it rests on the observations of linguistic behaviour. Since this procedure is applicable to any hypothesis of intension, Carnap characterizes the general concept of intension in the following way :

“The intension of a predicate ‘Q’ for a speaker X is the general condition which an object Y must fulfil in order for X to be willing to ascribe the predicate ‘Q’ to Y”<sup>37</sup>.

Stated more explicitly, “that X is able to use a language L means that X has a certain system of interconnected dispositions for certain linguistic responses. That a predicate ‘Q’ in a language L has the property F as its intension for X, means that among the dispositions of X constituting the language L there is the disposition of ascribing the predicate ‘Q’ to any object Y if and only if Y has the property F”<sup>38</sup>.

Carnap characterizes the concept of intention only for thing predicates. Such a characterization can be extended to expressions of other types including sentences.

Carnap speaks of two methods for determining the intension of a predicate in a natural language L. In such a

language *L* the intension of a predicate is determined on the basis of certain disposition of a person or a thing. Carnap tells us "let *D* be the dispositions of *X* to react to a condition *C* by the characteristic response *R*". He speaks of two ways for ascertaining whether or not a certain thing or person has a certain disposition. The first method consists in behaviouristic consideration: "It consists in producing the condition *C* and then determining whether or not the response *R* occurs". The second method is called by Carnap the method of structure analysis. "It consists in investigating the state of *X* (at *t*) in sufficient detail such that it is possible to derive from the obtained description of the state with the help of relevant general laws (say of physics, physiology, etc.) the responses with *X* would make to any specified circumstances in the environment". This will help us to determine whether under the condition *C*, *X* would make the response *R* or not. If so, then *X* has the disposition *D*, otherwise not". As an example, we may take the case of an automobile (*X*) and suppose that we want to make out whether *X* possesses the disposition *D*—the ability for a specified acceleration on a horizontal road at a speed of 10 miles per hour. We may test it either by using the behaviouristic method which consists in driving the car and observing its performance under the specified condition. Or we can decide about the disposition *D* simply by studying the internal structure of the car, and calculating with the help of physical laws the acceleration which would result under the specified conditions.

Having characterized the concept of intension, Carnap defines the concept of analytic in the following way :

"A sentence is analytic in *L* for *X* as if its intension (or range or truth-condition) in *L* for *X* at *t* comprehends all possible cases".

About synonymy. Carnap says: "Two expressions are

synonymous in the language *L* for *X* at time *t* if they have the same intension in *L* for *X* at *t*."

It seems clear that there is no point in confusing between 'analyticity' and 'synonymity'. Both these concepts are however intensional concepts but they can be clearly distinguished without "any claim of exactness".

Thus by analyticity in the observation language of science, Carnap would say (negatively) that an analytic statement is not the same as a statement expressing 'synonymy', nor is it a statement which is of a trivial kind like '*A* is *A*'. An observation statement in science is analytic in the sense that it depends mainly upon the postulates determining the fundamental meaning relations of the descriptive terms it contains. In this sense, an analytic statement is not non-informative. It is informative to the extent that it satisfies the pragmatics of a language with an understood reference to the testability of such a language in terms of observable test conditions or in terms of a particular system of interconnected dispositions for certain linguistic responses. The analyticity in observation language also presupposes some explicitly stated conventions for some of its special symbols.

It has, however, to be remarked that 'analyticity' does not mean 'once true, true for ever'. Even the observation statement is analytic in the sense as explained, the question of its being falsified remains open. The possibility of an alternative system of conventions or the possibility of an alternative set of test-conditions will always be there. If the analyticity of any observation statement makes it true for ever, it will become a case of tautology with the effect that 'scientific predictions' would become futile. So the language of science has to be interpreted in such a way that it makes room for future predictions and consequently 'analyticity' would have to be similarly interpreted as a case of 'non-triviality' and 'non-tautology'. This can,



however, be achieved if we place the required emphasis, along the lines of Carnap, on the postulates and the determination of essential meaning relations of the descriptive terms concerned. The merit of Carnap's thesis is that it combines 'analyticity' with 'being informative' in the sense that an analytic statement in the observation language of science will always make provision for the application of suitable and convenient test-condition and consequent linguistic responses which will, in their turn, enable the scientist to make successful predictions for the future.

## REFERENCES

1. Aspects of Scientific Explanation.
2. By a 'thing-language' Carnap means that sublanguage which constitutes the common part of everyday pre-scientific language and scientific language. Besides observable thing-predicates (e.g. 'hot', 'cold', 'heavy', 'light' etc.) this thing-language also contains disposition predicate-terms expressing the disposition of a thing to a certain behaviour under certain conditions, e.g., 'elastic', 'plastic', 'flexible', 'soluble', 'fragile', etc. (Readings in Philosophical Analysis—Feigl & Sellars, p. 408-23).
3. For Carnap "intersubjective" refers to 'the fact that the events described in this language are in principle observable by all users of the language' (Philosophy of R. Carnap, A. Schilpp (ed.), p. 52).
- 3a. Philosophical Foundations of Physics, p. 225.
4. Ibid.
5. Aspects of Scientific Explanation, p. 35, n. 44.
6. Ibid.
7. Von Wright: *The Logical Problem of Induction*, Oxford, 1965, p. 47. Towards the end of this section we will try to show how Carnap explains 'analyticity' without reference to the concept of 'tautology' in the observational language of science.
8. This point of criticism has been raised by Quine in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" [TDE] incorporated in his "From a Logical Point of view".
9. Erik Stenius, *Critical Essays*; North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam; 1972.
10. Quine has pointed out [TDE] that the definition of analyticity can be restated as follows: a statement is analytic when it is true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact.

11. The contradictory of "all men are rational animals" is "it is not the case that all men are rational animals". Morton White has pointed out that if we look at it syntactically it does not appear like "A and not-A". Even if it is transformed into "some men are not rational animals" still there seems to be no self-contradiction involved. However the statement becomes self-contradictory only in the 'sense' in which 'man' is used as synonymous with 'rational animal' and this is surely to beg the question\* [Morton White: *The analytic and the synthetic: An untenable dualism*, in Leonard Linsky, *Semantics and the Philosophy of Language*, Urbana, 1952.]
12. In the section on analyticity we have used the words 'sentences', 'judgements' and 'statements' indiscriminately.
13. This is a direct challenge to Carnap's view which we shall discuss later on.
14. The question of 'logical truth' will be taken up at the end of discussion on synonymy because the latter, according to Quine, logically leads to the former.
15. *Logic and Language: Studies Dedicated to Professor R. Carnap on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*; Synthese Library, 1962.
16. Erik Stenius: *Critical Essays*, p. 64.
17. *Ibid.*
18. We regret, it is not possible for us to give a firsthand reference to the works of Von Wright. We have depended on the comments of Stenius in his *Critical Essays*, p. 57-59.
19. One difficulty here arises in conceiving universal quantification in terms of conjunction. Von Wright admits this difficulty but disregards it as philosophically irrelevant in the present context.
20. *Red/Green Controversy*—Putnam, Pap, Putnam in *Necessary Truth* by Sumner & Wood.
21. Stenius speaks of three kinds of logic (1) Logic of connectives where a truth-table analysis of the connectives of a statement is sufficient to show that the statement is analytic, (2) logic of quantifiers, where along with an analysis of the conventions governing the use of the logical particles, a further analysis of the conventions governing the use of the quantifiers by means of the deductive methods of formalized predicate logic is added, (3) logic of special predicates; this is true of such statement which is analytic by virtue of the logic of its special symbols, for example, 'red' and 'blue' in "no objects are both red (all over) and 'blue' (all over)", in combination with predicate logic. In this sense all analytic statements are logical in any one of these three different kinds of logic (Stenius, *Critical Essays*, p. 65, 66).
- 21a. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
22. R. Carnap, *Philosophical Foundations of Physics*; Martin Gardner (ed.), Basic Book Inc., New York, London, ch. 27, p. 257-264.
23. Carnap emphatically states that the relatively simple direct sensory observables and those which are products of the enormously complex, indirect methods of observation constitute a single continuum; the line drawn across this continuum may vary depending on the points of view of various scientists or of the philosophers. Generally the scientists attach a wider meaning to this term than the philosophers. This fact, however, does not blur the distinction between these two kinds of terms: rather it shows that such a distinction is only a

matter of convenience or choice, consequently the observables and the non-observables differ not in kind, but only in degree depending on the complexity of the methods and techniques of observation concerned.

In illustrating his point on the 'continuum' which proceeds from the directly observables and ultimately terminates on what may be regarded as indirectly observable (usually called non-observables) Carnap refers to the point of view of the philosopher and that of the scientist. "A philosopher might object that the intensity of an electric current is not really observed. Only a pointer position was observed. An ammeter was attached to the circuit and it was noted that the pointer pointed to a mark labeled 5.3". From this observed fact, the current's intensity was merely inferred. However, the scientists reason for including it among the observables is that "the procedure of measurement is so simple, so well established, that it could not be doubted that the ammeter would give an accurate measurement of current intensity".

24. Descriptive terms are those which, in a broad sense, refer to observables.
25. The same distinction has been drawn by Carnap in theoretical language also which, however, we will not discuss here.
26. The word 'truth' is not taken here in any technical sense. Carnap uses the word in the quite ordinary sense according to which an analytic statement expresses a synthetic truth.
27. R. Carnap, *Meaning and Necessity*, Supplementary [B]
28. A language is labelled as 'natural language' which is based on a theory of meaning and the theory of reference the two branches of which are included under semantics. The former (theory of meaning) is primarily concerned with relations between linguistic entities and the latter (theory of reference) with relations between linguistic entities and the world. Such notions as analyticity significance, synonymy etc. are the basic concepts of the theory of meaning while the basic concepts of the theory of reference are naming, reference, truth, extension and so on. The problems concerning natural language include such questions as: When is a sentence significant? When are two expressions synonymous? When is an object referred to by an expression?

An artificial language, on the other hand, is fully determined by specifying its formation rules, its transformation rules, its meaning-postulates and the rules of reference which provide designata for the expressions constituting a particular artificial language system L. Artificial languages differ widely in the types of formal structures they exhibit. They can be constructed to have any derived properties. An artificial language is always an arbitrarily chosen system of postulates and structures. It may have its own theory of syntax and semantics (for example, a language constructed on the model of *Principia Mathematica* may be regarded as an artificial language).

In short, it may be said that a set of rules characterizing sentencehood in a natural language must at least be a 'context-restricted constituent-structure grammar'; on the other hand, in the case of artificial language, the set of rules characterizing the well-foundedness of expressions in a context-free constituent structure grammar.

29. According to Carnap semantics is that field of study where we deal only with

the expressions of the language and their relation to their designata....." On the basis of those facts we are going to lay down a system of rules establishing those relations. We call them semantical rules. Those rules are not unambiguously determined by the facts. ....The facts do not determine whether the use of a certain expression is right or wrong but only how often it occurs and how often it leads to the effect intended, and the like. A question of right or wrong must always refer to a system of rules. Strictly speaking, the rules which we shall lay down are not rules of the factually given language B; they rather constitute a language system corresponding to B which we will call the semantical system B-S. The language B belongs to the world of facts it has many properties, some of which we have found, while others are unknown to us. The language system B-S, on the other hand, is something constructed by us; it has all and only those properties which we establish by the rules". [The Foundations of Logic and Mathematics, International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, I, 3. Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1950. p. 4, 6, 7.]

30. W. V. Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'. We have retained, as far as possible, the original wordings of Quine unchanged since we believe that any change in the wordings may distort the meaning and elegance of his argument.
31. Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap; P. A. Schilpp (ed.), p. 917.
32. Ibid.
33. In a formalized language system, an analytic statement is true by stipulation. Now, what Quine believes is that in the scientific discourse no statement is completely immune from revision, and this "revision may strike anywhere". Consequently if circumstance arises, even the principles of logic and mathematics may be altered. His opinion is that the difference between a logical law and a natural law is only of degree.  
To this Hilary Putnam replies "The existence of divorce does not change the fact that the legal and declared intention of the persons getting married is to be wedded for life..... It is perfectly rational to make stipulations to the effect that certain statements are never to be given up, and those stipulations remain stipulations to that effect, notwithstanding the fact that under certain circumstances the stipulations themselves might be given up"—H. Putnam; *The Analytic and the Synthetic in Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Minneapolis, Vol. III, Herbert Feigl and Grover Maxwell (editors) 1966.
34. Meaning and Necessity, Supplement [B]
35. Ibid.
36. The theory of extension deals with concepts like denoting, naming, extension, truth and related ones. For example, the word 'blau' in German denotes any object that is blue; its intension is the class of all blue objects. The theory of intension deals with concepts like intension, synonymy, analyticity and other intensional concepts. Carnap uses the term 'intension' for the meaning of an expression, for its designative meaning component. For example, the intension of 'blau' in German is the property of being blue.  
[Meaning and Necessity, p. 233].
37. R. Carnap, Meaning and Necessity.
38. Ibid., p. 242.

## DOES MOORE ADMIT MENTAL ACT

P. K. MUKHOPADHYAY

### *Is It A Commonsense Doctrine ?*

#### I

I propose to discuss in this paper<sup>1</sup> something about the doctrine of mental acts. But hardly there is *the* doctrine of mental acts. The expression "doctrine of mental acts" covers more views than one and certainly views other than which are most usually referred to in recent times under that head. The views that the expression "doctrine of mental acts" cover fall in the first instance under two groups, or, in other words, doctrine of mental acts admit of, to begin with, two versions—a radical version and a moderate version. In accordance with the radical version this doctrine consists in the belief that mind is a set of acts or that mind is identical with the sum total of mental acts. The doctrine in this radical version denies the existence of anything which is mental but not an act, in some sense of "act". The doctrine of mental acts in its moderate or weaker version consists in the belief that there are things which are both mental and act whether or not everything that is mental is an act in the sense in which the word "act" is used in the radical version of the doctrine. Or, again, the doctrine in its weaker version may contend that while mind can never be exhausted by any number of mental acts there are some genuine cases of mental acts. What is common to the two weaker versions of the doctrine on the one hand and the radical version of it on the other is the belief that there are some aspects of mind which can properly be said to be acts.

The doctrine of mental acts which I propose to discuss

in this paper with reference to Professor Moore alone, is the doctrine in its weaker or moderate version—that weaker version of it in accordance with which nothing is said as to whether or not mind is sum total of mental acts. And though I believe that mind as a whole can never be identified with sets of mental acts, I can for the purpose of the present discussion ignore the point. Thus leaving it an open question whether or not everything mental is an act in some significant sense of the term, I shall use, in this paper, the expression “doctrine of mental acts” to refer to the doctrine in accordance with which certain mental acts are there. In this form, I believe, the doctrine is true. But even in this form or version of the doctrine, the view, which the doctrine represents is not perhaps sufficiently precise. For there may be two persons who while agree that there are mental acts may disagree as to whether or not any of these acts is cognitive. Some may admit that there are mental acts, that volition is an instance of mental act, and yet they may not admit that knowing is an act. But if there be persons who believe that there are cognitive acts then these persons will most certainly be regarded as subscribers to the doctrine of mental acts—at least in the weaker version of it. So the belief that there are cognitive acts can be said to be a form of the doctrine of mental acts though not the sole or *the* form of it.

I wish to make one more point in this connection. Even when I shall discuss in this paper the doctrine of mental acts in the sense in which the doctrine consists in the belief that there are cognitive acts I need not be taken to hold that all cases of knowing are instances of act in some significant sense of the term “act”. In fact, I believe that in some cases only knowing can be significantly said to be a form of doing while in other cases knowing is not a variety of doing. Knowing in these cases cannot be said to consist in doing anything in any significant sense of “doing”.

Therefore the doctrine of mental act under consideration here contends that there are at least some cases of knowing which may significantly be said to be doing something in the cognitive way. Thus from our point of view one may be said to believe in mental acts if one admits in some significant sense of "act" that there are at least some cases of knowing which can properly be said to be cases of (cognitively) acting in that sense of act.<sup>2</sup>

## II

Disregarding chronology I shall, in this paper, begin with the doctrine of mental act as we find it in Prof. Moore.<sup>3</sup> I shall not only begin with the views of Prof. Moore on the subject but I shall also limit my discussion almost wholly to his views. Some reasons for this preference will be clear, it is hoped, in due course. What is immediately clear is that it is Prof. Moore's influence that is more easily and widely detectable in contemporary English speaking philosophy so far as the doctrine under consideration is concerned. And this is, as I shall show in due course, what it should be. For even when the recent philosophers feel uneasy to subscribe openly to Prof. Moore's doctrine of mental acts, the philosophical achievement of the doctrine still has great appeal for them.

Unfortunately, however, Prof. Moore has said very little about mental acts to provide us with a well argued and well developed doctrine. Prof. Moore is not even very clear in what little he says about mental acts. Whatever that may be he has most certainly said the following things about mental acts.

Prof. Moore says (SMP p. 4) that the belief that there are mental acts is involved in the belief that we have minds. And this latter belief is most certainly a belief of common

sense. Prof. Moore also says that the belief in mental acts is itself a common sense belief. But even if this is true, that is to say, even if it is true that common sense believes that there are mental acts besides believing that there are minds, I do not think that the sense in which Common Sense believes that there are mental acts is the sense in which it believes that there are minds. I do not think, in short, that both these beliefs are Common Sense beliefs in the same sense. But even though I do not think this to be true, I shall not argue this point in detail. And in any case I shall not discuss this point at all just now. So far, as we have seen, Prof. Moore at least means that belief that there are mental acts is involved in the Common Sense belief that there are minds. For he says what is partly meant by saying that we have minds is that we perform certain mental acts. And Prof. Moore says that this is only a part and not the whole of what we mean when we say we have minds. But if this is, according to Prof. Moore, only a part of the meaning of saying that we have minds then he does not identify mind with a set of mental acts. Many, however, may feel disinclined to ascribe to Prof. Moore a belief in any residue of mind over and above the totality of mental acts. For the lesson of history of philosophy might have convinced them that one admits such a residue at one's peril. But whether or not many would like to ascribe to Prof. Moore a belief in mind which is other than sum total of mental acts., Prof. Moore did not identify mind with sets of mental acts although almost exhaustive list of mental acts enumerated by him suggests that he did. For he says that in dreamless sleep none of these mental acts is performed by us. But there is no reason to believe that Prof. Moore denies the existence of mind itself in dreamless sleep when no mental act is performed.

Thus Prof. Moore not only believes that there are



mental acts but also that there are minds. And when he says that Common Sense believes in mind he does not simply mean to say that Common Sense believes that there are mental acts. The next important thing Prof. Moore says about mental acts is that they are acts of consciousness. He not only says that there are some mental acts which are acts of consciousness. He says that each of these mental acts is an act of consciousness. When he says about certain thing that that thing is a mental act, it seems, he says nothing more nor less than that the thing is an act of consciousness. For he says that whenever we perform any of these mental acts we are conscious of something in some way or other. Once again, according to Prof. Moore, at least a part of the meaning of "I perform a mental act" is that "I am conscious, at the moment, of something in some way or other". And there is reason to think that Prof. Moore not only holds that Common Sense believes that there are mental acts but he also holds, justifiably or not, that Common Sense believes that these are acts of consciousness. And among mental acts each of which is, according to him, an act of consciousness, Prof. Moore enumerates not only seeing, hearing and remembering but also feeling and willing, liking and disliking, being angry and being afraid. Some of these which Prof. Moore does enumerate among mental acts are not ordinarily regarded to be acts of consciousness whether or not they are regarded as cases of mental act.

Prof. Moore does not, in any case, identify mind with set or sets of mental acts. And here I certainly agree with him. But all the things which he thinks to be cases of mental acts are not cases of acts whether physical or mental. And most certainly they are not, all of them, cognitive act in any significant sense of "act". We do not think that all the things Prof. Moore enumerates under the head are mental acts, nor do we think even all cases of cognition to

be cases of mental acts, But Prof. Moore not only holds that all cases of cognition are cases of mental acts but also he holds too many things to be mental acts. Whether Common Sense also hold both these I shall not discuss here. I think Common Sense does not hold these beliefs. And I think that absence of any precise criterion of "act" in general and "mental act" in particular is responsible for undue extension of the meaning of "mental act". Prof. Moore nowhere states any such criterion. Apart from enumerating certain things as mental acts he does not state any criterion for the application of the word "mental act". Nor even does he say that the list of acts enumerated by him is complete. Any way, I think that Prof. Moore uses the term mental act in unusually wide sense. We shall discuss which actually lent support to such undue extension of the meaning of the term under consideration. I mention it here to indicate, as we shall argue later, that to subscribe to the doctrine of mental act in such unduly wide sense of "mental act" is not to subscribe to the doctrine in any significant and justified sense.

Prof. Moore's view that all mental acts are acts of consciousness should not, one may urge, be construed as the view that all mental acts are cognitive acts. One who would urge this would urge on the sound basis that it is, as Prof. James Ward has shown in his *Psychological Principles*, error of intellectualism to identify whole of conscious life with the cognitive life. However sound this basis may be the fact is that Prof. Moore regards a mental act as act of consciousness on this ground. The ground, as he puts it, is that whenever we perform any of the things enumerated as mental act, such as liking, disliking etc., we are conscious of something in the sense in which we are conscious of something when we see or hear. But what Prof. Moore does not show, and which at the same time remains to be shown, is that the

thing or things we are aware of, if we are at all aware of, when we perform an act of, say, liking, we are aware of in that very same act. We believe that what is true is that unless we are aware of something we cannot have with regard to that something any mental act other than cognitive ones. This remains true even on the view in accordance with which only mental act that is there is the act of will.

### III

To return now to what Moore says about mental acts, we have seen that Prof. Moore takes Common Sense to believe that there are minds and that there are mental acts. These two do not mean, as we have seen, the same thing. Moore further holds that common Sense believes that there are quite many mental acts and all these acts of consciousness in the sense that whenever we perform any of them we are conscious of something in some way or other. One more thing which Moore says is that we know for certain and, most probably, as a matter of common sense that we know that these acts of consciousness—desiring, willing etc. are mental and not material. “At all events we are certain that we perform them and these acts are something very different from material objects. To hear is not itself a material object, however closely it may be related to certain material objects; and so on with all the rest—seeing, remembering, feeling, thinking, etc. These things, these acts of consciousness are certainly not themselves material objects” (SMP p. 4).

Prof. Moore now says that the mental acts even though not themselves material objects, most certainly bear, whenever they occur, relation to two distinct material objects. They are not distinct as material objects but they are different as the mental act is related to them in two different ways.

Whenever a mental act occurs it occurs, Moore says, in or inside the body of the man performing the act. And again a mental act when it occurs, is related to an object, in most cases material object other than the body, which it knows. And these two relations are different. We shall discuss this very important point later. But for the present it is what Prof. Moore says about the mental act and is something which he has not said before.

The last important thing that Prof. Moore has said about mental acts is that they take place in time.

Prof. Moore says all these things about mental acts. Perhaps he says more. But these are most important things that he certainly says about mental acts. We stated these somewhat in detail, though, I think, not in great detail, to make clear in which of its different possible and actual versions Prof. Moore subscribes to the doctrine of mental acts. And having done this we proceed to the next task.

#### IV

We shall ask now the question why does Prof. Moore subscribe to this doctrine, why does he introduce the notion of mental acts at all. I am well aware that the question may be regarded as biased. I admit that it is, and I think that all metaphysical doctrines are introduced with some bias if that is bias at all. That is to say, we believe that the notion of mental act as I understand it is to be introduced to explain certain phenomenon or view which we do entertain. And thus the introduction of the doctrine is determined by our view previously entertained. But in the case of Prof. Moore one may hold the case is just the reverse. He subscribes to the doctrine of mental act and does not introduce it. For him the doctrine is a common sense doctrine and it is a matter of commonsense belief that

mental acts exist. Now, I shall show, that not in what Prof. Moore has said so far but in what he says now that the weakness of his position consists. I also think that the critics have taken advantage of this weakness. But what exactly Moore says now?

I don't think it requires much labour to convince one that to say that there are mental acts and to say what they are—that they are part of what is meant by having minds, that they are acts of consciousness, that they are related to material objects, and finally that they occur in time—are different from saying how we come to know all that we say about mental acts. And so far as this last question is concerned Prof. Moore certainly says something. And I do not think that this something which he says now is right. I don't think that what he says is convincing or stand the test of criticism. Prof. Moore says alternatively that what he has said about mental acts, he has said on the evidence of direct apprehension and that we have known these as matter of common sense. What Prof. Moore exactly means when he says this we shall see presently. But one thing is clear. If what he says is right then our question why or on the strength of what consideration the of mental act was introduced by Prof. Moore cannot be legitimately and significantly raised. For I think if we know something on the evidence of direct apprehension or on the evidence of common sense then to believe in it cannot be said to be a case of introducing something. And yet I think that doctrine of mental act was certainly introduced by Prof. Moore with some specific purpose. But it is equally certain that Prof. Moore has said that what he has said about mental acts so far are guaranteed by common sense or direct apprehension.

Prof. Moore writes "so far, then, we have seen, that Common Sense believes that there are in the universe, at least two different kinds of things. There are, to begin with,

enormous numbers of material objects ; and there are also a very great number of mental acts or acts of consciousness." (SMP p. 4) And again Prof. Moore says that we are most certain that mental acts exist and that they are what he has said them to be. He draws a distinction between things that are known and things that are believed and he writes "we assume that an enormous number of truths about...the acts of consciousness of men belong to the first class—the class of things absolutely known,—known, that is by some man on the surface of the earth." (SMP p. 14)

This last is an important and a new point. As distinguished from 'merely believed' things that are 'absolutely known' are things of which we are certain. And Prof. Moore, I think, means this when he says that many things about mental acts are now absolutely known. But if then, in the second place, Prof. Moore means to say that that mental acts exist etc. are known for certain he surely means something more than he could legitimately mean when he said earlier that common sense believed that there are mental acts etc.

This is an important point. If Prof. Moore means to say that that there are mental acts is absolutely known or is certain then the further fact that common sense believes in them or believes that that they exist is certain adds nothing of logical value. It would have been of some importance if it meant that what is believed by common sense are for that matter things which are absolutely certain—that common-sense believed only such things. For then though nothing new would have been said—it would have been said in a new way viz. that that mental acts exist is a matter of certainty. For in that case believed by common sense would be another way of saying that what is believed is absolutely certain. But that is not, I think the implied sense of Prof. Moore. For Prof. Moore himself admits of the possibility of things believed by common sense being later on rejected. Many things which Common sense once believed are shown to be

wrong and are believed no longer. But to say that something is absolutely known implies in a sense that it is impossible later on not to believe in it.

Even if we grant that common sense does believe in the existence of mental acts this by itself does not show that the existence of mental acts is absolutely certain. And then again Prof. Moore says that some men are absolutely certain of the existence of mental acts.<sup>6</sup> And this once again cannot be the case if mental acts were absolutely certain. We agree that certain mathematical truths are there which are known by some to be certain and not by all. But then either those men are ignorant of these or the truth of these. These men do not understand the mathematical propositions in question. For on the accepted view to know a mathematical proposition and to know that it is absolutely true are no two different knowledge. Even then because mathematical truths are not all of them very simple it makes sense to say that everyone does not know for certain some mathematical truths. But on Prof. Moore's theory it cannot make any sense to say that everyone does not know that there are mental acts. For Prof. Moore says (SMP p. 49) that mental acts are absolutely known in the sense in which sensedata are absolutely known. That is, like sensedata mental acts are known by direct apprehension. But though it is possible not to know a particular sensedatum (say for example a red colour patch in case of a person who is colour blind) or a particular mental act (say for example a particular feeling) it is impossible that any one may be there who does not know by direct apprehension and therefore not know absolutely that there are mental acts. So far then everyone according to Prof. Moore has mind and having mind consist in performing some mental acts which when performed are known by direct apprehension; everyone does absolutely know that there are mental acts. And if thus everyone absolutely knows that mental acts exist then the further

information that existence of mental act is a part of common sense view of the universe does not add anything new or interesting logically. But I am satisfied that Prof. Moore is right when he says about mental acts, that every one is not certain that there are mental acts or even that there are sense data, if we understand by these words even half of what they mean in contemporary philosophy. These are rather notions introduced in philosophy for their explanatory value. And this explanatory value constitutes the consideration in favour of admitting mental acts or sensedata. Or again having introduced certain notions with a philosophical purpose we proceed to find out certain evidences in its support. Then later we behave as if it is only on these evidences that we believed in those things.

Thus whether in the senses discussed above each and every notion in philosophy is introduced or not (though I think this is always the case with truly philosophical notions) it will be admitted that at least in some cases certain not ons are introduced rather than supplied by common sense or immediate experience.

But it may be held that being introduced in the above sense is quite compatible with being supplied by common sense or immediate experience. For introducing a notion may mean no more than the following process or activity. Every man believes that he knows at least something. And almost every man believes in common that some of the things they know, they know certainly. To put it differently, it is commonly believed, or it is common sense to believe that we know something. But this something may be found on scientific investigation to be not what it was taken to be. For example men commonly believe that they know physical object when they see what are called tables, chairs etc. But in view of its incompatibility with scientific truths this belief cannot be accepted. But the belief is taken to be wrong not because it contends that we know something but



because it contends that that something is physical object. Scientific inquiry shows that something we know when it is commonly said that we know physical object is not really physical object; it is, say, sensedatum. And sensedatum is not a new entity which the philosophers introduce. They rather introduce a new name for what is given by common sense or immediate experience. Here we find that introducing a notion is rather introducing just a new name for the thing. And introducing a notion in this sense does not entail any new consideration other than the evidence of common-sense and immediate experience. Thus it may be held that even if Prof. Moore has introduced the notion of mental act, he may be right in holding that mental acts enjoy the support of common sense and immediate experience.

The defense, however, is a futile one. What is to be understood here by merely introducing a new name? Is it introducing a name to designate the very same object what the other name designated so long. If so then we can always replace the new name by the old name. And in that case introducing a new name serves no logical or philosophical purpose. The expression "physical object" and the expression "sense datum" are not surely two names for the same thing. Admittedly the two words have some common meaning. But beyond that minimum the words do not agree in their senses. Both "physical object" and "sensedatum" mean something which we know when we say we perceive something. But the word sensedatum was not necessary to mean just this. It was felt necessary to mean something what the other word did not mean or to resist some of the implications of the other word. Thus when we introduce in philosophy what is called a new word we introduce not a new name, nor a new thing but a new concept. We mean something what was not meant previously.

But it may be said that if we always introduce in philosophy something on a philosophical consideration how

can we maintain any relation with common sense and the world of ordinary sense experience? If sensedatum is a new entity why do we relate it to physical object and to nothing else? The answer which I have already provided requires further analysis. Take the case of physical object. And take the notion to have been supplied by common sense or immediate sense experience. Thus it is legitimate to say that that there are physical object or material object enjoys the support of common sense. Now on scientific inquires we find that (1) though something we know in the sense in which common sense holds that we know physical object, that something is not a physical object and (2) that it cannot be said that we know physical object but do not or did not entertain sensedatum. And then finding that the objection against our knowing physical object immediately cannot be brought against knowing sensedatum immediately we began to speak in terms of sense datum. And perhaps because we started with the common sense belief that physical object enjoyed the support of common sense and because, seeing sensedata is a part of the meaning of seeing physical object we think that 'sense' data also enjoy the same evidence. Prof. Moore does sometimes think in this line. For he takes what he gets by analysing a common sense belief to be itself a common sense belief. But then what we get analysing common sense or experience of something need not necessarily be itself a common sense belief. But, however bad a logic it may be, one is sometimes misled to think what we get on analysing common sense or experience to be itself there in common sense and experience. And in this way we perhaps came to believe that there are impressions, ideas, sensedata, mental act etc. And we came to believe that they enjoy the very same evidence which is enjoyed by the experience analysing which we got them. We came to believe that we are dealing with the same object and what has changed is merely the name.

Prof. Moore starts with the innocent assertion that common sense believes that we have minds. And then finding that to have minds means on analysis to have mental acts he concludes that common sense believed that we have mental acts. And if it is so then Prof. Moore uses common sense in too wide a sense. By common sense belief he means what even the ordinary people believe and also what can be derived from these beliefs by means of analysis. But in this sense, common sense is no longer that solid rock, that forceful support which Prof. Moore wishes us to take it for. For with analysis creeps in interpretation. And there may be alternative interpretations and analyses.

I am ready to accept that it is a common sense belief that we have minds. But I think common sense is neither so sure nor so pronounced about the existence of mental acts or of any of the things Prof. Moore says about mental acts. Similarly I believe that we are immediately aware of mental occurrences, that there are mental states. But I do not think that existence of mental acts or what Prof. Moore has said about them are either immediately evident or are believed by common sense.

So either Prof. Moore means by mental acts just mental occurrences or he cannot claim that mental acts enjoy the evidence of common sense or of immediate apprehension. If he means by mental acts nothing more than mental states, if "mental act" is a word just synonymous with the word "mental occurrence" then of course Prof. Moore does not introduce any new notion when he subscribes to or advocates the doctrine of mental acts. But in that case we have no logical ground to prefer the word "mental act" to the other word "mental occurrence." We may have some aesthetic or other preference for the new name but no logical or philosophical ground for our preference. On the other hand, if he means something new and different then he must have some consideration for using a new name with a new connotation.

And this consideration would constitute the ground for introducing the doctrine of mental act.

I believe that Prof. Moore had a particular consideration which determined him to introduce the notion of "mental act" which by no means mean just the same thing what mental occurrence means. But Prof. Moore failed to keep himself always explicitly aware of this and certainly failed to make it clear in his writing. But now let us grant that inspite of all the unclarity of expression Prof. Moore means by mental act nothing so gross as mind or so simple as mental occurrence. In that case we cannot say any longer that it is just a matter of common sense belief that there are mental acts, nor can we say that Common Sense says that they are what Prof. Moore says they are.

Now I shall further argue that mental acts are not what we are aware of in direct apprehension. Prof. Moore says, of course, that mental acts are directly apprehended. He writes "I think, therefore, we certainly sometimes directly apprehend not only sensedata or images, but also our own acts of consciousness" (SMP p. 49).

But we think he should not have said this. For at least in one sense in which he most certainly understands mental acts, some mental acts, to say the least, cannot be perceived immediately. For our present purpose I shall confine my discussion to cognitive acts only. And this does not matter. For in the sense in which Prof. Moore understands mental acts all mental acts are at least partly cognitive acts or acts of consciousness. For whenever we perform any mental act we are conscious of something. But whatever that may be Prof. Moore certainly takes knowing or cognitive act as a mental act. And this at least cannot be directly apprehended. For Prof. Moore takes knowledge as a relation, it is a relation between knower and something known (SMP p. 78). It is surely something more than that. But it is

at least the relation between the knower and the known. But a relation cannot be directly apprehended at least in the sense we ordinarily understand direct apprehension. And what we understand by direct apprehension is what, if not universally, is, most usually, understood by it. For what is known in direct apprehension is most simple and a relation is not simple. It is complex. For the simplest of relational situation involves besides relation at least two terms. And knowing a relation involves besides knowing it the knowing of two terms and their distinction. We do not think such a complex thing can be known by direct sensuous apprehension. We may agree that what we know in direct apprehension may be found, on analysis, to contain relation. But to say that what we know in direct apprehension contains relation is not to say that this relation is also known in that act of apprehension.

One may think that we are using direct apprehension in a restricted sense. In Prof. Moore's sense of the term a proposition may also be directly apprehended (SMP p. 77). It is true that Prof. Moore says this. And he says also that proposition may be about several different things (SMP p. 68) and about things which are not directly apprehended when the proposition about them is directly apprehended (SMP p. 69). But inspite of Prof. Moore we think that apprehension of such a complex thing as proposition cannot be a direct apprehension. Understanding a proposition is different from directly apprehending a sensedatum. And the difficulty in holding that not only sensedatum but also propositions are directly apprehended did not go unnoticed by Prof. Moore himself (SMP p. 67). When Prof. Moore finally concludes that even if two apprehensions are different confusion may be avoided by explicitly stating that he does mean by direct apprehension the apprehension of propositions in addition to apprehension of sensedatum (p. 68) it appears more a matter of linguistic decision than argument.

I have so far shown that Prof. Moore cannot say, though he does, that what he says about mental acts including that they exist enjoy the evidence of common sense or direct apprehension. And I believe that if Prof. Moore really started merely with common sense and evidences of direct apprehension he would have found that they did not support the doctrine of mental act and then he would not have subscribed to this doctrine. But he did subscribe to it. And I think he did it with some justification. But this justification was not that the doctrine was a matter of common sense belief or supported by direct sensuous apprehension. It is some other justification. And this justification consisted in the effectiveness of the doctrine to support some other truth in which he believed—the truth of which he was convinced at the instance of common sense, direct sensuous apprehension, or considerations of other kind.

*Is it a significant doctrine ?*

## V

The belief to defend which Professor Moor introduced, I think, the notion of mental act is central to realism. I could perhaps have as well said that he introduced the notion to defend common sense. But the belief referred to here as central to realism is only, if at all, a part of common sense while the latter contains various other beliefs for defending which the necessity for the introduction of the notion of mental act is not apparent. Secondly Prof. Moore was not always a champion of common sense.<sup>6</sup> And even when Prof. Moore first revolted into realism his ontology was one which would befit more a Platonist than a common man<sup>7</sup> who speaks in natural language.

The belief to defend which, as we said, Prof. Moore felt the need for introducing the notion of mental act and the

easy to suppose that we have before us only a single term. The term "blue" is easy enough to distinguish, but the other element which I have called "consciousness"—that which sensation of blue has in common with sensation of green—is extremely difficult to fix. That many people fail to distinguish it at all is sufficiently shown by the fact that there are materialists. And, in general, that which makes the sensation of blue or mental fact seems to escape us: it seems, if I may use a metaphor, to be transparent—we look through it and see nothing but the blue.<sup>18</sup> And again after a few pages Prof. Moore writes "When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue: the other element is as if it were diaphanous. Yet it can be distinguished if we look attentively enough, and if we know that there is something to look for."<sup>19</sup> Such passages do not tell us that we cannot know mental acts by introspection but they tell us at the most that such acts are not very easily grasped in introspection. In his *Some Main Problems of Philosophy* Prof. Moore's tone is again more confident. He writes "all of us who are not blind can directly observe this mental occurrence, which we mean by seeing. And it is solely with seeing in this sense-seeing, as an act of consciousness which we can all of us directly observe as happening in our own minds—that I am now concerned." (SMP p. 29).

I shall not discuss if Prof. Moore draws any distinction between introspection and direct observation. Nor shall I ask the question if Prof. Moore has the right to be so confident on a matter of psychology particularly when what he says was held not to be the case by such eminent psychologists as James Ward and Titchener, such philosophers with acute knowledge of psychology as Bradley and such contemporary analytic philosopher as Russell. I shall only venture to suggest some reason why Prof. Moore thinks that existence of mental act is evident on direct observation or

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performed expectations, and to exigencies in the theory of knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

But whether or not Prof. Moore occasionally confused between the occurrence or having of an experience with what this experience is—this does not seem to be the only reason why he claimed the evidence of direct observation in its support. One other reason is his not having any definite sense of “act” in the context of mental. He took mental act in the sense what we get when we introspect on an experience viz. a mental occurrence or event which is distinct from the object experienced. Prof. Moore therefore means by mental act no more than mental occurrence as distinct, of course, from object of such acts of consciousness. Taken in this sense mental acts certainly enjoy the evidence of direct observation or introspection but such a sense of act disappoints the critics who expected some more distinctive sense of “act.” A critic may say “one expects to discover something that bears unmistakably on its face the look of an ‘act.’ And when Prof. Moore gave us, on the evidence of introspection, only mental occurrences under the name mental act, the critic may be pleased to find his own findings are confirmed. For he holds that on introspection we discover or find certain mental occurrence etc. ; but “I cannot identify, as distinct from these, any act.....”<sup>21</sup> It may be said in defense of Prof. Moore that mental act, as he understands it, is not only an occurrence or is in time (and is produced) but it is also the common factor in sensations whose objects differ, that, above all, it is mental and distinct from the content or object element of experience. But even if all this is accepted it is yet not proved that knowledge is an act in some sense of “act” in which to say of a thing that it is an “act” is to say something different from what could be said by saying about that thing that it was a state or event.

Thus if Prof. Moore understands by mental act nothing other than mental event or occurrence or state then he can with

great plausibility claim that mental act enjoys the evidence of introspection or direct observation. But if Prof. Moore admits mental act only in this sense then he does not admit mental act in any significant sense of the term. For in the first place we, with some justification I think, believe that to admit mental act in any significant sense of the term is to admit it as a factor in experience which is mental and yet not just an event or state. Secondly to admit mental act significantly is to admit it in a sense in which sense its existence has not always been non-controversial. In the sense of mental occurrence as a distinct factor in experience (distinct from object and not from matter) the existence of mental act is admitted even by the idealists. Lastly a distinction between experience—in the sense of a mental state and not an act—and experienced is enough to offer the kind of resistance Prof. Moore wants to offer against the subjective idealists. And if his epistemological exigencies can be met by admitting and distinguishing mental state then why, critics ask, are mental acts needed at all.<sup>24</sup> And this may be the reason why while aiming at securing realism (or refuting idealism) Prof. Moore never felt any need for admitting mental act in any sense other than mental state—a distinct factor in awareness.

Thus mental event or occurrence, it may be granted, enjoys support of direct evidence and is capable of resisting any tendency to become a subjective idealist. As such Prof. Moore did not perhaps feel the need for thoroughly analysing or classifying the notion of mental act. But such a notion of mental act does not secure realism even if it does refute idealism. Thus mental acts as Prof. Moore understands them do not enjoy the philosophical consideration in their support. To put it differently mental act enjoys the evidence of direct apprehension in a sense of "act" understood in which sense acceptance of mental act does not secure realism. And the sense of "act" in which acceptance of mental act can secure realism

in that sense mental acts do not enjoy direct evidence. But what is that sense? I shall, confining myself to Prof. Moore's view, offer here a negative reply only. In the sense of occurrence or event of state admittance of mental act cannot secure realism. And Prof. Moore has not given any other sense to the term "act" when he spoke of mental act.

Some may object that Prof. Moore has certainly accepted mental act in the significant sense of something intentional. He says again and again that our awareness is always an awareness *of*. And one who takes awareness to be intentional takes awareness as an act in the significant sense of the term. But in his own writing there is no evidence that Prof. Moore attaches any more significance to the discovery of this intentional character of awareness than that there is in every awareness a distinct element or factor other than the content or object. But to recognize that in every act of awareness there is a distinct element over and above the content is is never seriously doubted by any one including idealists. For idealists are not debarred from using such expression as "thought of table" "thought of pleasure" etc. In other words, the idealists did not fail to notice that there is a distinct element in experience which stands in the relation 'of' to its object. But they so analysed this relation as to make the object dependent on the other element and also to make both the elements—terms of this relation 'of'—mental. Prof. Moore could be said to have admitted the existence of mental act in some significant sense if he instead of simply recognizing a distinct element in experience could so analyze it as to make it hold between two distinct kinds of things mental and material, or show that the object so related is independent of the other factor. One may say that Prof. Moore holds that from the fact that our awareness is always an awareness *of*, it not only follows that the object is independent of the awareness but also that the object is non-mental. True, Prof. Moore says "there is, therefore, no

question of how we are to "get outside the circle of our own ideas and sensations." Merely to have a sensation is already to be outside that circle. It is to know something which is as truly and really not a part of my experience as anything which I can ever know."<sup>23</sup> But when Prof. Moore says this he has somehow managed to forget what he has written a few pages before. He has written there "To be aware of the sensation of blue is not to be aware of mental image—of a "thing" of which 'blue' and some other element are constituent parts in the same sense in which blue and glass are constituents of a blue bead." But still to be aware of the sensation of blue "is to be aware of an awareness of blue ; awareness being used, in both cases, in exactly the same sense."<sup>24</sup> and so in the sense of being intentional. If thus something intentional can be an object of another intentional act of awareness how can we say that to admit awareness to be intentional is to admit its object to be non-mental. For certainly non-mental things are not intentional. In such cases object of the intentional act is itself something intentional and therefore not material. Thus by saying that awareness is intentional Prof. Moore has not said anything that can imply that the object of awareness is material. Nor even does he hold that it follows from the fact that awareness is intentional that its object is independent. For later when, I think his realistic conviction gained in strength; he came fully to realize that there is a distinction between perceiving a hand and sensing colour like blue. And he unhesitatingly now says that at least in some cases what is sensed is dependent on our sensing it. Prof. Moore writes "we can say that the felt difference between bodily pains which I feel and after images which I see, on the one hand, and my body on the other, which has led philosophers to say that any such pain or after-image is "in my mind," whereas my body never is but is always "outside of" or "external to" my mind, is just this, that whereas there is a contradiction in supposing

a pain which I feel or an after-image which I see to exist at a time when I am having no experience, there is no contradiction in supposing my body to exist at a time when I am having no experience."<sup>25</sup> Thus at least it is perfectly consistent with the intentional character of awareness that its object is not only not material but also not independent either. And in his 'Proof of an External World' Prof. Moore seems to have reached the conclusion that existence of such a world of material object is not so much an intentional implicate of our experience which is intentional but a logical presupposition of the possibility of knowledge. Material object is not intentionally but only logically independent of our experience.<sup>26</sup>

It may be asked if even to hold experience like sensation, perception etc. to be intentional is not to regard them as act in any significant sense then what is that sense? To answer this question one is to write another article. All that I hope to have done in this article besides the negative result of showing that Prof. Moore does not admit mental act in any significant sense is to have demonstrated that we need endeavour to (further) clarify the notion of mental act and/or intentionality.

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1. Though not necessary for his understanding this paper which is self-complete yet for the desired orientation the reader should be informed that this paper is only one of a series of papers (some of which have already been published) and that the series was planned with the purpose of showing : (i) that the word "act" has somehow retained its currency in the context of "mind" and "mental", (ii) that the word has little or none of its original senses, (iii) that no new and significant sense or use has been given to it in at least the present day English speaking Philosophy, (iv) that, as a result, the contemporary English speaking Philosophers cannot be said to subscribe to the doctrine of mental act in any significant sense, (v) that for discoverable, though not

necessarily conclusive reason, they feel uneasy and uncertain over the question of admitting mental act and as a result the doctrine of mental act is usually defended or rejected in not very promising line, (vi) that a renewed attempt to discover or formulate a significant version of the doctrine is still rewarding.

In the present paper I have sought, with reference to Prof. Moore alone to illustrate the points (i)—(iv) and to some extent the point (vi). For consideration of space only the first instalment of the article under reference is being published in the present issue.

2. Much economy of space and precision could be effected, it may be urged, if I had said that I would discuss in this paper doctrine of cognitive act and not the doctrine of mental act. I have, however, advisedly chosen the expression mental act in the title. For I believe that if the question of cognitive act were judged on its own merit then less number of people would deny such act. What stood in their way of admitting cognitive act was their general view of mind (or soul) and of its functioning. Consequently the strongest argument against admitting cognitive act is the rejection of mental act in general. And if the doctrine of cognitive act can be established on independent ground then a simpler but logically most effective refutation of the view that there are no mental act can be found. Thus though the doctrine of cognitive act, if true, cannot prove the doctrine of mental act in its most radical version yet it can disprove the view radically opposed to the doctrine of cognitive act viz the view that there are no such things as mental acts. Once this logical connection between the two doctrines is perceived it may also be perceived that at the root of the attitude of uncertainty towards admitting cognitive act is the apprehension that realistic epistemology necessitates a particular theory of mind which a realist is not entitled to accept.
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easy to suppose that we have before us only a single term. The term "blue" is easy enough to distinguish, but the other element which I have called "consciousness"—that which sensation of blue has in common with sensation of green—is extremely difficult to fix. That many people fail to distinguish it at all is sufficiently shown by the fact that there are materialists. And, in general, that which makes the sensation of blue or mental fact seems to escape us: it seems, if I may use a metaphor, to be transparent—we look through it and see nothing but the blue.<sup>18</sup> And again after a few pages Prof. Moore writes "When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue: the other element is as if it were diaphanous. Yet it can be distinguished if we look attentively enough, and if we know that there is something to look for."<sup>19</sup> Such passages do not tell us that we cannot know mental acts by introspection but they tell us at the most that such acts are not very easily grasped in introspection. In his *Some Main Problems of Philosophy* Prof. Moore's tone is again more confident. He writes "all of us who are not blind can directly observe this mental occurrence, which we mean by seeing. And it is solely with seeing in this sense-seeing, as an act of consciousness which we can all of us directly observe as happening in our own mind—that I am now concerned." (SMP p. 29).

I shall not discuss if Prof. Moore draws any distinction between introspection and direct observation. Nor shall I ask the question if Prof. Moore has the right to be so confident on a matter of psychology particularly when what he says was held not to be the case by such eminent psychologists as James Ward and Titchener, such philosophers with acute knowledge of psychology as Bradley and such contemporary analytic philosopher as Russell. I shall only venture to suggest some reason why Prof. Moore thinks that existence of mental act is evident on direct observation or

apprehension. So long he hesitantly says that mental act enjoys evidence of direct observation, it seems, he confuses between the occurrence of a mental act or experience with the experience itself, between *having* an experience and *knowing* it, between the awareness *that* we have an experience and *what* experience we have. That we have an experience, when we have it, is, everyone will agree, directly evident. It is not possible to be in doubt or be mistaken about whether we have an experience when we have it. But it is perfectly consistent with this to say that we do not know what experience it is that we have. We fail often even to describe let alone define or analyse an experience which we nonetheless know to possess. Prof. Moore says that we cannot (or do not usually) directly observe or introspect mental act when he is aware of the distinction between the *that* of an experience and the *what* of it and is also aware that this *that* aspect is directly observable. "And in general, that which makes the sensation of blue a mental fact seems to escape us .....we may be convinced that there is *something* but *what* it is is no philosopher, I think, has yet clearly recognised." Again when Prof. Moore says almost in the same place that with difficulty we can discover mental act by introspection "if we know that there is something to look for" he confuses between *what* of a mental act with the *that* of it and hence hopes to find it in introspection. But since the *what* aspect is not to be had in introspection there is the modification: 'with difficulty,' "if we look attentively enough" etc. For to discover that we have an experience—a mental act—we need not look attentively. And we cannot look attentively to discover mental act of certain particular description because we do not know what we are to look for. Besides there is the danger that if we introspect with the conscious expectation of finding an act of certain description and find it then a critic may justly say "I am forced to think that the discovery of acts is due less to impartial observing than to



performed expectations, and to exigencies in the theory of knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

But whether or not Prof. Moore occasionally confused between the occurrence or having of an experience with what this experience is—this does not seem to be the only reason why he claimed the evidence of direct observation in its support. One other reason is his not having any definite sense of “act” in the context of mental. He took mental act in the sense what we get when we introspect on an experience viz. a mental occurrence or event which is distinct from the object experienced. Prof. Moore therefore means by mental act no more than mental occurrence as distinct, of course, from object of such acts of consciousness. Taken in this sense mental acts certainly enjoy the evidence of direct observation or introspection but such a sense of act disappoints the critics who expected some more distinctive sense of “act.” A critic may say “one expects to discover something that bears unmistakably on its face the look of an ‘act.’ And when Prof. Moore gave us, on the evidence of introspection, only mental occurrences under the name mental act, the critic may be pleased to find his own findings are confirmed. For he holds that on introspection we discover or find certain mental occurrence etc.; but “I cannot identify, as distinct from these, any act.....”<sup>21</sup> It may be said in defense of Prof. Moore that mental act, as he understands it, is not only an occurrence or is in time (and is produced) but it is also the common factor in sensations whose objects differ, that, above all, it is mental and distinct from the content or object element of experience. But even if all this is accepted it is yet not proved that knowledge is an act in some sense of “act” in which to say of a thing that it is an “act” is to say something different from what could be said by saying about that thing that it was a state or event.

Thus if Prof. Moore understands by mental act nothing other than mental event or occurrence or state then he can with

great plausibility claim that mental act enjoys the evidence of introspection or direct observation. But if Prof. Moore admits mental act only in this sense then he does not admit mental act in any significant sense of the term. For in the first place we, with some justification I think, believe that to admit mental act in any significant sense of the term is to admit it as a factor in experience which is mental and yet not just an event or state. Secondly to admit mental act significantly is to admit it in a sense in which its existence has not always been non-controversial. In the sense of mental occurrence as a distinct factor in experience (distinct from object and not from matter) the existence of mental act is admitted even by the idealists. Lastly a distinction between experience—in the sense of a mental state and not an act—and experienced is enough to offer the kind of resistance Prof. Moore wants to offer against the subjective idealists. And if his epistemological exigencies can be met by admitting and distinguishing mental state then why, critics ask, are mental acts needed at all.<sup>22</sup> And this may be the reason why while aiming at securing realism (or refuting idealism) Prof. Moore never felt any need for admitting mental act in any sense other than mental state—a distinct factor in awareness.

Thus mental event or occurrence, it may be granted, enjoys support of direct evidence and is capable of resisting any tendency to become a subjective idealist. As such Prof. Moore did not perhaps feel the need for thoroughly analysing or classifying the notion of mental act. But such a notion of mental act does not secure realism even if it does refute idealism. Thus mental acts as Prof. Moore understands them do not enjoy the philosophical consideration in their support. To put it differently mental act enjoys the evidence of direct apprehension in a sense of "act" understood in which sense acceptance of mental act does not secure realism. And the sense of "act" in which acceptance of mental act can secure realism

in that sense mental acts do not enjoy direct evidence. But what is that sense? I shall, confining myself to Prof. Moore's view, offer here a negative reply only. In the sense of occurrence or event of state admittance of mental act cannot secure realism. And Prof. Moore has not given any other sense to the term "act" when he spoke of mental act.

Some may object that Prof. Moore has certainly accepted mental act in the significant sense of something intentional. He says again and again that our awareness is always an awareness *of*. And one who takes awareness to be intentional takes awareness as an act in the significant sense of the term. But in his own writing there is no evidence that Prof. Moore attaches any more significance to the discovery of this intentional character of awareness than that there is in every awareness a distinct element or factor other than the content or object. But to recognize that in every act of awareness there is a distinct element over and above the content is never seriously doubted by any one including idealists. For idealists are not debarred from using such expression as "thought *of* table" "thought *of* pleasure" etc. In other words, the idealists did not fail to notice that there is a distinct element in experience which stands in the relation 'of' to its object. But they so analysed this relation as to make the object dependent on the other element and also to make both the elements—terms of this relation 'of'—mental. Prof. Moore could be said to have admitted the existence of mental act in some significant sense if he instead of simply recognizing a distinct element in experience could so analyze it as to make it hold between two distinct kinds of things mental and material, or show that the object so related is independent of the other factor. One may say that Prof. Moore holds that from the fact that our awareness is always an awareness *of*, it not only follows that the object is independent of the awareness but also that the object is non-mental. True, Prof. Moore says "there is, therefore, no

question of how we are to "get outside the circle of our own ideas and sensations." Merely to have a sensation is already to be outside that circle. It is to know something which is as truly and really not a part of my experience as anything which I can ever know."<sup>23</sup> But when Prof. Moore says this he has somehow managed to forget what he has written a few pages before. He has written there "To be aware of the sensation of blue is not to be aware of mental image—of a "thing" of which 'blue' and some other element are constituent parts in the same sense in which blue and glass are constituents of a blue bead." But still to be aware of the sensation of blue "is to be aware of an awareness of blue ; awareness being used, in both cases, in exactly the same sense."<sup>24</sup> and so in the sense of being intentional. If thus something intentional can be an object of another intentional act of awareness how can we say that to admit awareness to be intentional is to admit its object to be non-mental. For certainly non-mental things are not intentional. In such cases object of the intentional act is itself something intentional and therefore not material. Thus by saying that awareness is intentional Prof. Moore has not said anything that can imply that the object of awareness is material. Nor even does he hold that it follows from the fact that awareness is intentional that its object is independent. For later when, I think his realistic conviction gained in strength, he came fully to realize that there is a distinction between perceiving a hand and sensing colour like blue. And he unhesitatingly now says that at least in some cases what is sensed is dependent on our sensing it. Prof. Moore writes "we can say that the felt difference between bodily pains which I feel and after images which I see, on the one hand, and my body on the other, which has led philosophers to say that any such pain or after-image is "in my mind," whereas my body never is but is always "outside of" or "external to" my mind, is just this, that whereas there is a contradiction in supposing

a pain which I feel or an after-image which I see to exist at a time when I am having no experience, there is no contradiction in supposing my body to exist at a time when I am having no experience."<sup>26</sup> Thus at least it is perfectly consistent with the intentional character of awareness that its object is not only not material but also not independent either. And in his 'Proof of an External World' Prof. Moore seems to have reached the conclusion that existence of such a world of material object is not so much an intentional implicate of our experience which is intentional but a logical presupposition of the possibility of knowledge. Material object is not intentionally but only logically independent of our experience.<sup>28</sup>

It may be asked if even to hold experience like sensation, perception etc. to be intentional is not to regard them as act in any significant sense then what is that sense? To answer this question one is to write another article. All that I hope to have done in this article besides the negative result of showing that Prof. Moore does not admit mental act in any significant sense is to have demonstrated that we need endeavour to (further) clarify the notion of mental act and/or intentionality.

## REFERENCES

1. Though not necessary for his understanding this paper which is self-complete yet for the desired orientation the reader should be informed that this paper is only one of a series of papers (some of which have already been published) and that the series was planned with the purpose of showing: (i) that the word "act" has somehow retained its currency in the context of "mind" and "mental", (ii) that the word has little or none of its original senses, (iii) that no new and significant sense or use has been given to it in at least the present day English speaking Philosophy, (iv) that, as a result, the contemporary English speaking Philosophers cannot be said to subscribe to the doctrine of mental act in any significant sense, (v) that for discoverable, though not

necessarily conclusive reason, they feel uneasy and uncertain over the question of admitting mental act and as a result the doctrine of mental act is usually defended or rejected in not very promising line, (vi) that a renewed attempt to discover or formulate a significant version of the doctrine is still rewarding.

In the present paper I have sought, with reference to Prof. Moore alone to illustrate the points (i)–(iv) and to some extent the point (vi). For consideration of space only the first instalment of the article under reference is being published in the present issue.

2. Much economy of space and precision could be effected, it may be urged, if I had said that I would discuss in this paper doctrine of cognitive act and not the doctrine of mental act. I have, however, advisedly chosen the expression mental act in the title. For I believe that if the question of cognitive act were judged on its own merit then less number of people would deny such act. What stood in their way of admitting cognitive act was their general view of mind (or soul) and of its functioning. Consequently the strongest argument against admitting cognitive act is the rejection of mental act in general. And if the doctrine of cognitive act can be established on independent ground then a simpler but logically most effective refutation of the view that there are no mental act can be found. Thus though the doctrine of cognitive act, if true, cannot prove the doctrine of mental act in its most radical version yet it can disprove the view radically opposed to the doctrine of cognitive act viz the view that there are no such things as mental acts. Once this logical connection between the two doctrines is perceived it may also be perceived that at the root of the attitude of uncertainty towards admitting cognitive act is the apprehension that realistic epistemology necessitates a particular theory of mind which a realist is not entitled to accept.
3. Like the notion of intentionality, the notion of cognitive act may be discussed in respect of its need from the prospective point of view of realism. (Cf. author's article in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 2 (1974) pp. 115–137). And in contemporary English philosophy Prof Moore is among the most able champions of realism. Besides relevant views of Moore as also of Husserl may be traced to Brentano to whom the doctrine under reference owes its origin in our days. (a) Cf. Metz, R., *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd. (1938/1950) p. 539. (b) Cf. Jordan, Z. A., *Philosophy and Ideology*, D Reidel Publishing Company (1963) p. 6 (c) Cf. Selection in transl. from Brentano's *Psychologie Vom empirischen Standpunkt* in Chisholm, Red. *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*, George Allen & Unwin (1960).
4. 'SMP' is the abbreviation used for G. E. Moore's 'some Main Problems of Philosophy', George Allen and Unwin 1953/1962.
5. Cf. Ayer, A. J., *Russell and Moore: The Analytical Heritage*, McMillan (1971) p. 188.
6. Cf. Prior, A. N., *Objects of Thought*, Oxford University Press (1971) p. 32.
7. Cf. Selection from Brentano, in Chisholm, Red. *Realism and The Background of Phenomenology*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd. (1960) p. 44.
8. Addis, Ian and Lewis, D. *Moore and Ryle: Two Ontologists*, Martinus Nijhoff (1965) p. 103.

9. Italics mine.
10. Ayer, A. J., *Russell and Moore*, pp. 167-8
11. Addis, L and Lewis. D, *Moore and Ryle*, p. 103.
12. Cf. Quinton, A.M. 'Contemporary British Philosophy' in O' Conner, D.J. (ed.) *A Critical History of West Philosophy*, The Free Press. p. 535.
13. Moore, G.E., *Philosophical Studies*, Routledge and Kegan Paul (1922/1960) p. 26. italics mine.
14. Cf. Addis, L and Lewis, De, *Moore and Ryle* pp. 119-20.
15. Blanshard, B., *The Nature of Thought*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. (1939/55) Vol. I p. 396.
16. Mr. White, however, thinks it to be a historical accident. Cf. White, A.R., in O' Conner ed. *A Critical History of Western Philosophy* p. 464. But cf. Earng, A.C: 'Moore and Metaphysics' in Ambrose and Laferowitf ed. G.E. Moore: *Essays in Retrospect*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, (1970) p. 142. also.
17. Quoted by Blanshard, B in his *The Nature of Thought* Vol. I p. 396.
18. Moore, G E., 'Refutation of Idealism' in *Philosophical Stud'ies*, p. 20.
19. Ibid p. 25.
20. Blanshard, B., *The Nature of Thought* Vol. I. p. 397.
21. ibid p. 397.
22. ibid p. 408.
23. Moore, G.E., *Philosophical Studies* p. 27.
24. ibid p. 25.
25. Moore, G.E., 'Proof of an External World' included in Ammerman, R ed. *Classics of Analytic Philosophy*, Tata-McGraw Hill Publishing Coy. (1965) p. 79.
26. ibid p. 80.

## ON RUSSELL'S INQUIRY

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1. During his long life Bertrand Russell produced a number of philosophical works, many of which deal with epistemological problems but only two are concerned exclusively with theory of knowledge. These are *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* and *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*. The former, published in 1940 (when he was sixty-eight) and the latter, published eight years later, together represent his most mature thinking on epistemological topics. Russell, as the proponent of scientific method in philosophy is well-known for emending his views in every new work, but it can be said, without fear of contradiction, that he did not recant his theories set forth in the *Inquiry*, and that *Human Knowledge* is in many ways an elucidation and supplementation of the earlier book. As everybody knows, meaning and truth are the two main topics of epistemology, and Russell's *Inquiry* is an excellent treatise on theory of knowledge—at least in the eyes of those who follow the empirical tradition. It is indeed a unique work in that it pays due attention to language, logic and metaphysic—a metaphysic of experience. T. S. Eliot said of Mr Apollinaire: "He is a charming man; but after all what did he mean?" The present dissertation seeks to show that the charming man Russell did mean certain things quite clear and definite in his *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*, so that this was no wild-goose chase in the field of human knowledge.

In his preface to the *Inquiry* Russell has said: The book results from an attempt to combine a general outlook akin to Hume's with the methods that have grown out of modern logic." As Dr Elizabeth Eames has pointed out, apart from his metaphysical realism with respect to universals



i.e. classes, relations, numbers and abstract entities, Russell has been an empirical realist regarding the independent existence of the object knowledge, and this is reflected in his treatment of belief, proposition, fact, knowledge and truth. (*Bertrand Russell's Theory of Knowledge*; p. 27). And it goes without saying that Russell's philosophy exemplified and pioneered modern analytic philosophy, Russell himself recognising the practice of analysis as the most persistent trait, and the cardinal method of his thought. (*My Philosophical Development*, p. 133). Russell used a method of analysis ever since he abandoned the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, and believed that "only by analysing is progress possible" (*Ibid*, p. 14).

Russell has indicated that he started his epistemological speculations in the context of six specially important 'prejudices'. These 'prejudices', taking the term in a Pickwickian sense, are as follows. (i) "It seemed to me desirable to emphasise the continuity between animal and human minds." (ii) There is another prejudice in favour of explanations in terms of physics wherever possible. "I have always been deeply persuaded that, from a cosmic point of view, life and experience are causally of little importance." (iii) "I feel that the concept of 'experience' has been very much over-emphasised, especially in the Idealist philosophy, but also in many forms of empiricism." (iv) "I think that all knowledge as to what there is in the world, if it does not directly report facts known through perception or memory, must be inferred from premises of which one, at least, is known by perception or memory." (v) Adequate attention has to be paid to meaning and to linguistic problems generally, there being many concerned with relation between words and things. (vi) The most important initial prejudice is regarding method: "my method invariably is to start from something vague but puzzling, something which seems

indubitable but which I cannot express with precision..... There are many who decry analysis, but it has seemed to be evident...that analysis gives new knowledge without destroying any of the previous knowledge.....Belief in the above process is my strongest and most unshakable prejudice as regards the methods of philosophical investigation."(*Ibid*, pp. 128-133). It is to be noted that these presupposition do not run counter to the objective set forth by Russell in his preface to the *Inquiry* but in fact elaborate it in respect of both the method and the content of the work.

2. The *Inquiry*, as Russell tells us in the Introduction, is an investigation of certain problems concerning empirical knowledge, and the method adopted by him differs from traditional theory of knowledge chiefly in the importance attached to linguistic considerations. The secular godfather of logical positivism was in this work showing the influence upon himself of behaviourism. The two main questions he proposed to discuss were : (i) what is meant by "empirical evidence for the truth of a proposition ?" and (ii) what can be inferred from the fact that there sometimes is such evidence ? The net result of the inquiry is to substitute articulate hesitation for inarticulate certainty, whatever the value of this result. He defines "proposition" as "all the sentences which have the same meaning as some given sentence," a sentence being a single word or, more usually, a number of words put together according to the rules of syntax, which expresses something of the nature of an assertion, a denial, an imperative, a desire, or a question.

There are two different inquiries, both important, and each having a right to the name "theory of knowledge." (i) Russell accepts the scientific account of the world, not as certainly true, but the best at present available, and theory of knowledge has to consider what sort of phenomenon knowing is as contained in the world presented by science

Perceptive awareness is a species of sensitivity, which consists in behaving, in the presence of a stimulus of a certain kind in a way in which the animal or thing does not behave in its absence. Learning by experience is the same thing as the acquisition of habits. Signs depend, as a rule, upon habits learnt by experience, and language is a species of the genus 'sign.' As soon as the behaviour of an organism is influenced by signs, it is possible to trace the beginnings of the distinction between "subjective" and "objective" as also between knowledge and error. Both knowledge and error, at this stage, are observable relations between the behaviour of the organism and the facts of the environment. Within its limitations, theory of knowledge of the above sort is legitimate and important. (ii) But there is another kind of theory of knowledge which goes deeper and which has, Russell thinks, much greater importance. When the behaviourist observes the doings of animals, and decides whether these show knowledge or error, he is not thinking of himself as an animal, but as an at least hypothetically inerrant recorder of what actually happens. He knows that animals are deceived by mirrors and believes himself to know that he is not being similarly deceived. But as soon as we remember the possible fallibility of the observer, we have introduced the serpent into the behaviourist's paradise. The serpent whispers doubts and has no difficulty in quoting scientific scripture for the purpose. Scientific scripture, in its most canonical form, is embodied in physics (including physiology). The observer, when he seems to himself to be observing a stone, is really, it physics is to be believed, observing the effects of the stone upon himself. Thus science seems to be at war with itself; when it most means to be objective it finds itself plunged into subjectivity against its will. Thus naïve realism leads to physics, and physics, if true, shows that naïve realism is false. These considerations induce doubt and therefore lead us to a critical scrutiny of what passes as

knowledge. This critical scrutiny is theory of knowledge in the second sease,—A few remarks are at once pertinent. Few thinkers would be willing to christen Russell's first variety theory of knowledge at all. The second variety is indeed theory of knowledge but knowledge in the limited sense of perceptive awareness. Even here, however, he is under the dominance of, a sense-datum theory of perception. Naive realism as such does not lead to physics nor does physics tell us that when we perceive a stone, we are confined to the effects of an objective reality upon ourselves. The objects of perception are joint products of the hypothetical pure subjectivity and pure objectivity, neither of which can be known as such. Both naive realism and pure subjectivism are false doctrines. I have discussed all this in detail in the chapter entitled "Truth, Falsity and Perception" of my *Logic, Value and Reality* (pp. 87-113). But to return to Russell's own account:

Epistemology, Russel proceeds, must arrange all our beliefs in a certain order. These statements about matters of fact that appear credible independent of any argument in their favour are "basic" propositions: these are connected with certain non-verbal occurrences that may be called experiences. Theory of knowledge involves both logical and psychological elements. Logically, we have to consider the inferential relation between basic propositions and those that we believe because of them; also the logical relations which often subsist between basic propositions, causing them, if we accept certain general principles, to fit into a system which, as a whole, strengthens the probability of each of its constituents; also the logical character of the basic propositions themselves. Psychologically, we have to examine the relation of basic propositions to experiences, the degree of doubt or certainty that we feel in regard to any of them, and the methods of decreasing the former and increasing the latter. In the *Inquiry*, Russell does not discuss

the nature of logical and mathematical knowledge. His main problem is the relation of basic propositions to experiences. In considering empirical truth, he is concerned with a relation between linguistic and non-linguistic events. The relation of a non-verbal experience to a verbal statement which it justifies is a matter which empiricism is bound to investigate.

In spite of his courtship with logical positivists, Russell passes an initial caveat that the linguistic bias of logical positivists makes their theory of "protocol" or basic propositions vague and unsatisfactory. Russell will conclude his discussion of empirical truth by considering how far, if at all, the logical categories of language correspond to elements in the non-linguistic world that language deals with, or whether logic affords any basis for metaphysical doctrines. He considers three theses to be specially important. (i) It is argued that, on the basis of a single experience, a number of verbal statements are justified. (ii) In every assertion two sides must be separated: on the subjective side, the assertion expresses a state of the speaker; on the objective side, it intends to indicate a fact and succeeds in this intention when true. (iii) Finally, there is the question of the relation between truth and knowledge. Truth, according to Russell, is the fundamental concept, and knowledge must be defined in terms of truth, *not* vice versa. This entails the consequence that a proposition may be true although we can see no way of obtaining evidence either for or against it. This sharply demarcates his stand from that of logical positivists. It involves also a partial abandonment of the latter's metaphysical agnosticism. Russell further believes that we have to admit principles of non-demonstrative inference which may be difficult to reconcile with pure empiricism. This is discussed in detail in *Human Knowledge*, which is therefore a logical sequel to the *Inquiry*. Such principles are reduced to five; viz.; the postulate of quasi-permanence, the postulate

of separable causal lines, the postulate of spatio-temporal continuity in causal lines, the structural postulate regarding the common causal origin of similar structures, and the postulate of analogy. (*Human Knowledge*, pp. 487-496). These principles are known in a different sense from that in which particular facts are known. They are not *a priori* but are known in the sense that we generalise in accordance with them—the postulates without which empirical knowledge is not fully available. Though they can be fitted into a framework which has an empiricist flavour, the knowledge of them cannot be derived from experience, but their verifiable consequences are such as experience will confirm. (*Ibid*, p. 507). In a way they set limits to experience. Russell's love of truth is manifest in the acceptance of these postulates of empirical knowledge.

3. Several chapters of the *Inquiry* are devoted to the elucidation of the meaning of words. These as occurrences in the sensible world are of four sorts: spoken, heard, written and read. A given word, say "dog," may be uttered, heard, written or read by many people on diverse occasions. The spoken word "dog" is not a single entity: it is a class of similar movements of the tongue, throat and larynx. There is no difference of logical status between *dog* and the word "dog"; each is general, and exists only in instances. The universal *dog* is not, however, a canine essence laid up in the Platonic heaven. The word in fact is a family (as Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* said), just as dogs are a family. Words differ from other classes of bodily movements, noises, or shapes, by having "meaning". Words are used in many ways, but the most elementary use of object-words is the demonstrative use. Knowing a language consists in using words appropriately and acting appropriately when they are heard. In adult life, when we use a word we do so, as a rule, not only because what the word denotes is present to sense or imagination, but because we wish our hearer to

do something about it. In the meaning of a sentence, there are three psychological elements: the environmental causes of uttering it, the effects of hearing it and (as part of the causes of utterance) the effects which the speaker expects to have on the hearer. Speech consists usually of noises made by persons with a view to causing desired actions by other persons. Its indicative and assertive capacities remain fundamental. Only sentences have intended effects, whereas meaning is not confined to sentences. Object-words have a meaning which does not depend on their occurring in sentences. At the lowest level of speech, this distinction between sentences and single words does not exist. Anything going beyond assertions as to what is sensibly present can only be effected by means of sentences. There are sentences containing no object words; they are those of logic and mathematics. But all empirical sentences contain object-words, or dictionary words defined in terms of them. Thus the meaning of object-words is fundamental in the theory of empirical knowledge, since it is through them that language is connected with non-linguistic occurrences in the way that makes it capable of expressing empirical truth or empirical falsehood. (*Inquiry* pp. 23-29), As the *Inquiry* is concerned with the analysis of empirical knowledge, Russell rightly emphasises the importance of object-words.

In the hearing of an object-word, he proceeds, there are four things to be considered: the understanding and speaking of the heard word in the presence as well as absence of the object: understanding a heard word may be defined behaviouristically or in terms of individual psychology. The meaning of an object-word can only be learnt by hearing it frequently uttered in the presence of the object. As soon as the association between an object-word and what it means has been established, the word is understood in the absence of the object i.e. it suggests the object in exactly

the same sense in which sight and touch suggest one another. Generally, when you have an object-word which you understand, your behaviour is, up to a point, that which the object itself would have caused. In learning to speak, there are two elements, first, the muscular dexterity, and second, the habit of using a word on appropriate occasions. What can be learnt in this way depends upon psychological capacity and interest. Theoretically, given sufficient capacity, we could express in the object-language every non-linguistic occurrence. The primary or object-language does not contain the words "true" and "false," or logical words such as "not," "or," "some," and "all".

In the secondary language, we are concerned with the object-language, not simply as noises or bodily movements, but as having meaning. In practice, as opposed to philosophy, we only apply the words "true" and "false" to statements which we have heard or read or considered before we possessed the coincidence that would enable us to decide which of the two words was applicable. There are some further things to be said in this connexion. (i) The word "true" may be applied to a sentential utterance, a sentence, or a proposition. (ii) A sentence or proposition is known to be true when it has a certain relation to an experience. (iii) Not all sentences in the primary language can be correctly said to describe a single experience.

When you do what a logician would call "asserting not-p", you are saying "p is false". But how can experience show you that a proposition is false? If there are negative empirical propositions, there must be, among basic propositions, either pure negations, such as "this is not white", or implications of the form "p implies not-q", e.g., "if this is grey, it is not white".

Disjunctions arise in practice in the form of a choice. In the non-linguistic or non-psychological world nothing is



indicated by a disjunction. Psychologically, "or" corresponds to a state of hesitation. Hesitation arises when we feel two incompatible impulses, and neither is strong enough to overcome the other. A disjunction is the verbal expression of indecision, or, if a question, of the desire to reach a decision. The straightforward correspondence theory of truth, which is valid in the primary language, is no longer available where disjunctions are concerned. Owing to the fact that words are general, the correspondence of fact and sentence which constitutes truth is many-one, i.e., the truth of the sentence leaves the character of the fact more or less indeterminate.

Propositions about "some" arise, in practice, in four ways: (i) as generalisations of disjunctions; (ii) when, having come across an instance, we are interested in the compatibility of two general terms which might have been thought incompatible; (iii) as steps on the way to a generalisation; (iv) in cases of imperfect memory analogous to those that were considered in connexion with disjunction. A statement about "some" has three kinds of uses: it may be a step towards the proof of a proposition with a singular subject, or towards the proof of a general proposition, or it may be a refutation of a contrary generalisation. Most of what has been said about "some" applies also to "all". There is, however, an important difference in regard to knowledge. We often know propositions about "some", and they can be proved empirically, although they cannot prove facts of direct observation. But propositions about "all" are much more difficult to know, and can never be proved unless there are some such propositions among our premises. Since there are no such propositions among judgements of perception, it might be thought that we must either forgo all general propositions or abandon empiricism. Yet this seems to contradict common sense. Russell is not sure if empiricists are right when they reject from amongst

basic propositions all extra-logical general statements. He thinks that, apart from logic, we do know some general propositions otherwise than by induction by generalisation. (*Inquiry*, pp. 23-93).

Russell's analysis of object-words is illuminating, but his account of logical words leaves much to be desired. The analysis of "not" and "or" is defective in that the parasitical character of primary negation has not been sufficiently emphasised and his elucidation deprives disjunctions of their judgemental character. I have discussed both in the chapter on "Affirmation Negation" and "Simple and Complex Assertions" in my *Logic, Value and Reality* (pp. 131-142 and 153-160). I regard propositions as primary and words as secondary in theory of knowledge: a contrary approach makes Russell's analysis of logical words, in particular, somewhat superficial and ever misleading at times. Besides, he seems to hint at a sort of intuitive generalisation but has not elaborated this stand of thought. His atomism (logical and psychological) lies at the root of much mischief. He does not seem to have advanced much beyond Hume here.

4. Russell defines "proposition" as "what a sentence signifies". A proposition is "the class of all sentences having the same significance as a given sentence". The question of significance, he confesses, is difficult and somewhat intricate. An assertion has two sides, subjective and objective. Subjectively, it expresses a state of the speaker, which may be called a belief, which may exist without words and even in animals and infants who do not possess language. Objectively, the assertion, if true, indicates a fact: if false, it intends to indicate a fact, but fails to do so. There are some assertions, namely those which assert present states of the speaker which he notices, in which what is expressed and what is indicated are identical; but in general these two are different. The significance of a sentence is what it expresses. Thus

true and false sentences are equally significant, but a string of words which cannot express any state of speaker is nonsensical. A sufficient but not necessary criterion of significance is that perceptual experiences can be imagined, or actually occur, which make us use the phrase (or its contradictory) as an assertion. Truth and falsehood depend upon a relation between the significance of the sentence and something which is neither words nor images (except when the sentence is about words or images).

Russell cannot make up his mind what exactly a proposition is and one cannot but remark that he looks wistfully at the logically positivists' verifiability theory of meaning linked with behaviourism. After a long discussion, he decides that it is necessary to distinguish propositions from sentences but that propositions need not be indefinable. They are to be defined as psychological occurrences of certain sorts—complex images, expectations etc. Such occurrences are expressed by sentences, but the sentences assert something else. When two sentences have the same meaning, that is because they express the same proposition. Words are not essential to propositions. What is indicated by a sentence is its verifier, when the sentence is true, but is nothing where the sentence is false. The relation of a belief or a sentence to what it indicates, i.e. its verifier (if any), is often somewhat remote and causal. Although to know a verifier is to perceive it, we must know the truth of many sentences whose verifier cannot be perceived. Such sentences, however, always contain a variable where the name of the verifier would occur if our perception faculties were sufficiently extensive. (*Inquiry*, pp. 170-225).

The description of propositions as psychological attitudes—complex images, expectations etc.—brings out Russell's atomism in its worst colours. A proposition in our view is a logical entity—the structural aspect of a judgement whose

epitemic aspect is belief. Taken by itself, a proposition is a logical abstraction, but the propositional reference is the meaning of the sentence that expresses a judgement in its total integrity. A proposition is thus identifiable neither with a class of sentences nor with psychological attitudes of any form. And it is the conformity or non-conformity of the proposition with its referent that makes the judgement true or false as the case may be. This has been explained in detail in the chapter on Judgement and Proposition, and Proposition and Meaning of my *Logic, Value and Reality* (pp. 25-50).

5. Russel discusses further the nature of empirical knowledge in what follows. Given any empirical sentence which we believe, our reason for believing it may be one or more other sentences which we believe, or may be some non-linguistic occurrence having a certain relation to the sentence believed. In the latter case, the sentence is a basic factual sentence. In the former case in which the sentence is inferred, there must be among the premises of the inference at least one basic factual sentence; the other premises will belong to classes (a) principles of logical inference, and (b) principles of extra-logical inference. What we know must be true, but truth is wider than knowledge in two respects. (i) There are true sentences (if we accept the law of excluded middle) as to which we have no opinion whatever. (ii) There are true sentences which we believe and yet do not know, because we have arrived at them from faulty reasoning.

When an empirical belief is true, it is true in virtue of a certain occurrence which Russell calls a verifier. In the case of "I am hot," there is a simple kind of correspondence between the statement and the verifier. In this case, the correspondence theory of truth holds *simpliciter*. This case covers all the factual premises of empirical knowledge. It does not cover the premises used in inference, e.g., induction

In all other empirical assertions such as "you are hot," the correspondence on which truth depends is more complex. We resort to an analogical argument in thinking that you have experiences which I do not have. The hypothesis of the physical world simplifies the statement of causal laws—not only of those that cannot be verified but also of those that can. Of course, there can be no argument against the physical world, since experience will be the same whether it exists or not. Therefore it is justified as a working hypothesis. The fact in virtue of which a singular belief is true is often quite remote from the grounds upon which we entertain the belief, and the belief may be knowledge even the fact is quite unknowledgeable. The relation between fact and belief is even more remote in the case of general beliefs, such as "all men are mortal." Here there is not a single verifier but a multitude, though there could be a single verifier.

It is impossible, says Russell, to define "truth" for existence-propositions except in terms of basic existence-propositions. But this leaves the question: "In what sense are the basic existence-propositions true?" It seems, he says, that we shall have to say they are "experienced". If I believe, e.g., that there are occurrences in the physical world which no one perceives, these occurrences must be nameless: the translation which substitutes a hypothetical name will therefore be false, even if the original belief was true. Russell elucidates an important truth dimly apprehended by Berkeley.

Belief is essentially pre-linguistic, and when we express a belief in words, we have already taken the most difficult of the steps that lead from the animal to the logician. General beliefs have their pre-intellectual origin in habits of a certain kind. Animal induction differs from scientific induction in various ways: one of these is that the former, but not the

latter, involves expectation. Animal induction never leads to belief in the general proposition "A is followed by B," but only; when A occurs, to the expectation "B will occur." Belief in the general law, as opposed to animal habit, can influence action in the absence of the stimulus A. What is indicated by a general statement "All A's are B's" is a collection of occurrences, one for each A. This collection is the verifier of the general statement: when every member of the collection occurs, the statement is true; when there is any member of it that does not occur, the statement is false. Inductive evidence may make an empirical generalisation probable. It will be seen that Russell has virtually restated Hume's views in modern terminology. (*Inquiry*, pp. 226-258).

Russell's basic propositions are rather narrow in their scope and this, again, is due to his atomism. I have accepted seven categorics (viz., reference, existence, identity, otherness, quality, quantity and relation) which are present in every single act of perception. Basic propositions are of five types, reference and existence being equally prominent in every perception but the other five categories figure prominently in different perceptions. Russell's basic propositions yield very little knowledge about the external world, but the same is not true of my basic propositions. The nature of categorics and their relations to generic concepts has been explained in the chapter on categories and concepts of my *Logic, Value and Reality* (pp. 51-70). The nature of complex inference including inductive generalisation has been discussed in the same work (pp. 234-250) as well as in my *Causality in Science and Philosophy* (specially pp. 153-196).

6. Russell next considers four main types of theory as to "truth" or as to its replacement by some concept which is thought preferable. He rejects (i) the coherence theory advocated by Hegelians and certain logical positivists, (ii) the warranted assertibility theory of Dewey (a modification

of the pragmatist theory), (iii) the probability theory of Reichenbach, and accepts the correspondence theory, according to which the truth of basic propositions depends upon their relation to some occurrences, and the truth of other propositions depends upon their syntactical relations to basic propositions. The last theory has, however, two forms, "between which the decision is not easy." (a) In one form, the basic propositions must be derived from experience, and therefore propositions which cannot be suitably related to experience are neither true nor false. (b) In the other form, the basic propositions need not be related to experience but only to "fact," though if they are not related to experience they cannot be known. Thus the two forms of the correspondence theory differ as to the relation of truth to knowledge. Russell calls these the epistemological and the logical theory, respectively, the latter being technically assumed in logic, which is involved in certain difficulties if the theory is rejected.

Over a great part of the field, the two theories are identical. Everything that is true according to the epistemological theory is also true according to the logical theory, though not vice versa. All the basic propositions of the epistemological theory are also basic in the logical theory, though again not vice versa. The syntactical relations of basic propositions to other true propositions are the same in both the theories. The propositions that can be known empirically are the same in both theories. There are differences, however, in regard to logic: in the logical theory, all propositions are either true or false, whereas in the epistemological theory a proposition is neither true nor false if there is no evidence either for or against it, i.e., the law of excluded middle is true in the logical theory, but not in the epistemological. This is the most important difference between them.

The correspondence used in defining "truth," in both theories, is only to be found in the case of basic propositions. In the epistemological theory, basic propositions are a subclass of epistemological premises, namely, those, which are caused, as immediately as possible, by perceptive experiences. This excludes the premises required for inference, whether demonstrative or probable, as also any extra-logical premises used for inference, if there be such. In the logical theory, basic propositions must have a definition not referring to our knowledge. The logical definition is obtained by observing the logical form of epistemologically basic propositions and omitting the condition that they must be experienced, while retaining the condition that they must be true.

The epistemological theory of truth, if taken seriously, confines truth to propositions asserting what I now perceive or remember. Since no-one is willing to adopt so narrow a theory, we are driven to the logical theory of truth, involving the possibility of events that no-one experiences and of propositions that are true although there can never be any evidence in their favour. Facts are wider than experiences. A verifiable proposition is one having a certain kind of correspondence with an experience: a true proposition is one having exactly the same kind of correspondence with a fact—except that the simplest type of correspondence, that which occurs in judgements of perception, is impossible in the case of all other judgements, since these involve variables. As an experience is a fact, verifiable propositions are true; but there is no reason to suppose that all true propositions are verifiable. Here Russell parts company with logical positivists regarding both meaning and truth. He adds that if we assert positively that there are true propositions that are not verifiable, we abandon pure empiricism. But he is careful to point out that pure empiricism is believed by no one, and if we are to retain belief that we all



regard as valid, we must allow principles of inference which are neither demonstrative nor derivable from experience (*Inquiry*, pp. 289-395). These have been referred to earlier in this essay, and show that Russell has gone beyond Hume. We have only to add that if a proposition is regarded as a self-consistent logical entity and not a mere jumble of words, the law of excluded must be considered to reign supreme in the field of knowledge, though strictly speaking, the law applies not to propositions as such but to sentences expressing judgements in their concrete actuality (of which propositions are only structural aspects).

7. In the concluding chapter of the *Inquiry* (pp. 341-347), Russell discusses the question whether anything, and if so, what, can be inferred from the structure of language as to the structure of the world. There has been a tendency, he points out, especially among logical positivists, to treat language as an independent realm, which can be studied without regard to non-linguistic occurrences. With regard to the relation of words to non-verbal facts, most philosophers can be divided into three broad types :—(A) those who infer properties of the world from properties of language ; they include Parmenides, Plato, Spinoza, Hegel and Bradley : (B) those who maintain that knowledge is only of words ; among these are the nominalists and some of the logical positivists : (C) those who hold that there is knowledge not expressible in words, and use words to tell us what this knowledge is ; these include the mystics, Bergson and Wittgenstein.

Of these the third can be dismissed as self-contradictory. The second comes to grief on the empirical fact that this is not a verbal fact, although it is indispensable to the verbalists. Hence we have to make the best of the first alternative. The problem may be divided into two parts : (i) what is implied by the correspondence theory of truth in the measure in

which this theory has been accepted? (ii) is there anything in the world corresponding to the distinction between different parts of speech, as this appears in a logical language? As regards correspondence, when a proposition is true, it is true in virtue of one or more occurrences which are called its verifier. If it is a proposition containing no variable, it cannot have more than one verifier. We have thus to inquire whether, given a sentence (supposed true), we can infer anything as to the structure of the verifier from that of the given sentence. In a logical language, sentences—except object-words used in an exclamatory manner—require words other than names. Such words, generically, are called by Russell relation-words, including predicates as words for monadic relations. The definition is syntactical: a name is a word which can occur significantly in an atomic sentence of any form; a relation-word is one which can occur in some atomic sentences, but only in such as contain the appropriate number of names. It is generally agreed that language requires relation-words; the question at issue is: "what does this imply as regards the verifier of sentences?" A universal may be defined as the meaning of a relation-word. Such words as "if" and "or" have no meaning in isolation and it may be that the same is true of relation-words.

It may be suggested (erroneously) that we need not assume universals, but only a set of stimuli to the making of one of a set of similar noises. There is no escape, says Russell, from admitting relations as parts of the non-linguistic construction of the world; similarity, and perhaps also asymmetrical relations, cannot be explained away like "or" or "not", as belonging only to speech. Such words as "before" and "above," just as truly as proper names, mean something which occurs in objects of perception. It follows that there is a valid form of analysis which is not that of whole and part. In a logical language, therefore, there will

be *some* distinctions of parts of speech which correspond to objective distinctions. Assuming that we can in some manner or other get rid of all universals except similarity, we cannot explain away similarity without avoiding a vicious endless regress. The similarity of two things is as truly a non-linguistic fact as, e.g., the yellowness of one thing. My doctrine of categories provides for the inference from perception of a number of objective features in the perceived object—including those allowed by Russell and many more. An analysis of the conditions of perceptual knowledge yields these features, which cannot therefore be brushed aside as subjective or linguistic.

Anyway, Russell concludes that complete metaphysical agnosticism is not compatible with the maintenance of linguistic propositions. Some modern philosophers hold that we know much about language, but nothing about anything else. This view forgets that language is an empirical phenomenon like another, and that a man who is metaphysically agnostic must deny that he knows when he uses a word. For his part, Russell believes that "partly by means of the study of syntax we can arrive at considerable knowledge concerning the structure of the world."

The culmination of Russell's analytic effort is the limited empiricism of *Human Knowledge*. The outcome of the work, as Dr. Eames has urged is as follows. One side of the bridge begins with perception and analyses from it the most reliable elements; the other side of the bridge begins from common sense and scientific knowledge and argues back that which must be assured to justify this knowledge. But in the middle is a small gap between the two spans—the gap of the data that are not quite *pure* and of the postulates that are not entirely justified. "But

the gap is narrow enough to jump across with a minimum of risk." (Eames, *op. cit.*, p. 220). In our view, there is really no gap, because the data are not really quite pure (—the pure objective being a figment of the imagination) and the postulates proper of scientific inference are indirectly justified (—empirical inference not being merely linguistic exercise). In any case, the bridge started being constructed in *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*.

## THE SELF AS GIVEN IN DIRECT EXPERIENCE

SANKARIPRASAD BANDYOPADHYAY

In this paper I shall try to show that there is nothing *prima facie* illegitimate or absurd in holding that the self (I mean in this context other mind or alter ego) can be given in direct experience. This, of course, entails a direct reference to the theories of knowledge of the other mind (self, mind and alter ego have been used without much distinction)—mainly the inference theory. While such a reference cannot be avoided my interest does not centre in the polemics against the inference theory. I am more concerned with clarifying to some extent the notions of direct experience and 'the given' and to show thereby that the self may quite legitimately be given in direct experience.

### I

Some doubts regarding the genuineness of the problem have been cherished in some quarters from the days of Hume. Hume's attempt at liquidating the problem has sparked off quite a few trends of thought to do the same on different grounds and a linguistic attempt at such a liquidation is one of the main contemporary developments from Humeanism. Following later Wittgenstein these thinkers maintain that the "muddle of self-knowledge" is due to our failure to follow the logical behaviours of mental terms.

To be very brief, a sort of linguistic behaviourism fostered by Wittgenstein tried to prevent the shipwreck of the physicalistic psychology of Carnap and other earlier positivists. This novel and intriguing thesis of Wittgenstein captured the imagination of some such acute minds as Ryle, Wisdom, Austin and Malcolm. These thinkers on their

part have shown a readiness not to take cognizance of the problem of self-knowledge and try to maintain that this is a pseudo-problem. I know I have been too brief on a very important point to pursue the point adequately. But I leave it at that.

Without digressing much from my main point it may be briefly stated that the positivist has only half-heartedly endeavoured to show the uselessness of such genuine problems. Intrigued by the counter-revolution of science against philosophy the positivist and his linguistic successor summarily dismisses every problem which does not respond to his logical or linguistic therapy. The logical positivist displays a sort of intellectual smugness, and the language analyst a rare passion for analysis of the words and expressions of the English-speaking people. Unsuccessful to bring the diverse but insistent modes of consciousness under some neat generality and still under the spell of objectivism, the positivist and the language philosopher fail to explain the problem of knowledge of other selves. Labouring under the restrictions imposed by what Merleau-Ponty calls objectivistic prejudices, they fail, or rather refuse, to reach the depth of self, and then, promptly declare the uselessness of chasing a non-existent goose. This is because of their affiliation to a particular philosophical tradition. The failures of those who laboured under objectivist prejudices are interesting and instructive ; and this is why I have referred to them in this brief paper and in such a sermonic fashion. I only wish that considering the preoccupation of the present paper, this lapse will be pardoned.

## II

That I know the alter ego is a matter of common acceptance ; it is equally true that there is a problem here for the

philosopher, if not for the common man. The problem of knowledge of other minds, genuine as it is, appears to be an insoluble one on the assumption of the primacy of one's knowledge of oneself. The problem is usually stated<sup>1</sup> in this form: Mind knows itself directly in a unique way which is differently called 'rational insight' or 'intuition' or 'self-experience' (*necessarily private*) or what Ryle calls knowledge by 'privileged access.' Mind inasmuch as it is the subject can only *know* anything as an *object*. For, the subject, it is conceived, can never become the object while it functions as the subject. Mind knows its objects directly too but only as its objects. So far as 'Other minds' are 'subjects' like me any knowledge of them is beset with the apparently unavoidable and unassailable dilemma: (a) if these minds are subjects, as they really are, they can never be known as objects; (b) if they are known, they become objects of knowledge and not the subject and so, what we know is an object and not the subject *qua* subject. Therefore, in either case, direct knowledge of other minds is not possible. This position has for long been generally accepted as above board and the inference theory for the knowledge of other minds has, in some form or other, taken its start on this basic presupposition. It is in our interest here to discuss this theory very briefly. It will be my attempt to show here that, far from being the *only* legitimate theory for explaining knowledge of other minds, inferential or indirect knowledge presupposes some instances of direct knowledge; and if this can be done, the case against inferential theory is established.

A study of the historical or genetic development of the inferential theory may not be quite relevant in the present context. Nor it is necessary to name a few philosophers as the exponents of the theory as our interest is in the position itself. To name however, a representative thinker supporting

this theory I should mention J. S. Mill. S. Hampshire, in an attempt to defend Mill's theory, has offered a variant of the inferential theory.<sup>2</sup>

In an answer to the question as to how I know that there are other sentient creatures, Mill writes.<sup>3</sup>

"I conclude that other human beings have feelings like me, because, first, they have bodies like me, which I know, in my own case, to be the antecedent condition of feelings; and because, secondly, they exhibit the acts, and other outward signs, which in my own case I know by experience to be caused by feelings. I am conscious in myself of a series of facts connected by an uniform sequence, of which the beginning is modification of my body, the middle is feelings, the end is outward demeanour. In the case of other human beings, I have the evidence of my senses for the first and last links of the series, but not for the intermediate link. I find, however, that the sequence between the first and last is as regular and constant in those other cases as it is in mine.....Experience, therefore, obliges me to conclude that there must be an immediate link....."

Price<sup>4</sup> also has given a very interesting formulation of the analogical argument for proving the existence of other minds. He suggests that one's evidence for the existence of other minds is derived primarily from the understanding of language. His idea is that when meaningful noises come from somebody, this provides some evidence that the foreign body which made the noises, is animated by a mind like one's own. Price proceeds from his own introspective knowledge of his own use of language and argues analogically to the existence of other minds producing such language.



Ledger Wood<sup>5</sup> has presented a thorough-going analysis of this 'secondary intersubjective cognition' by pointing out the five steps involved in such a theory. The first step is one's perception of his own body as discriminated from other perceptual objects. The second is the perception of animal and human bodies other than one's own and the discrimination of these from the world of inanimate objects. The third is the introspective apprehension by an individual of his own cognitive, emotional and affective states and of himself as the subject of these states. The fourth step involves the correlation of a subject's perception of his own body with the system of introspected processes which constitute his mind. And the last one consists in the imaginative introjection of mental states and processes into the behaviour of other animate bodies.

The most fundamental presupposition (and defect) of the inferential (analogy) theory seems to be that it accepts self-knowledge (one's knowledge of his own mind) as the primary and ultimate source of one's knowledge of other selves. It seems thus to be necessarily based on the 'privileged access' theory of one's own self. The analogy theory to function has to assume: (a) The immediacy, privacy and primacy of my knowledge of my self. It thus is committed to some sort of solipsism. (b) The knowledge of other selves is inferred from the knowledge of one's own self. In such inference again the role offered to the body is dubious. We think that on both these counts, the analogy-theory is unacceptable.

Granted that my knowledge of my self is immediate, private and primary, the intended conclusion does not follow. Starting from my knowledge of my self we can never infer, by analogy or by any other recourse, the existence or knowledge of other minds. I am justified only to say about my own if I am debarred from any direct knowledge

of the other mind. I may at most infer *my* multiplication in the situations concerned, but I can never go beyond myself.

The formal pattern of the inference that is supposed to take place is that if A and B are conjoined together in my experience, perception of A in a new instance leads me to infer B. Now, what is experienced by me along with certain bodily states is my mental state, let us say, e.g. *my* anger (and not just anger in general). Perceiving then similar bodily states, I can infer, if at all I do infer, *my* anger, and not *his* anger.

Strawson, in his book *Individuals*, has tried to steer clear of any such difficulty by maintaining that the ascription of 'mental-conduct concepts' (Ryle) or P-predicates (Strawson) logically requires that while one ascribes them to one's own self, one must also be prepared to ascribe them to others. 'Pain' does not have different meanings for 'I' or 'you' or 'he'. This is an attempt to bypass the issue of primacy of self-knowledge claimed by many. Strawson maintains that one is justified in ascribing P-predicates to others by *observing* their *behaviour*. (∴ "one ascribes P-predicates to others on the strength of observation of their behaviour;" —p. 106—Strawson P. F.—*Individuals*). This is a very clever attempt not to accept the inference-theory for knowledge of the alter ego on the one hand and also not to admit, at least explicitly, its direct knowledge. Strawson in his characteristic fashion as found in the book maintains that scepticism regarding ascription of P-predicates to others is not tenable as the formulation of the thesis of scepticism itself will require in some form or other a sort of acceptance of the possibility of such ascription. And Strawson argues, as usual from the point of view of our ordinary linguistic statements, that such ascription of P-predicates to others is very common and perfectly in order. Strawson, because of his professed preoccupations elsewhere, has not adequately explained the

solution to the problem of the knowledge of the other mind on which, it is expected, is based the ascription of P-predicates to others. His criterion of "observation of others' behaviour" has been very scantily explained and leaves much room for further questioning and clarification. One point, however, seems clear. Strawson has sufficiently indicated his disapproval of the inference-theory and also for acceptance of the primacy and privacy of one's knowledge of one's own self.

On the theory of privacy of mental life—which is an ally of the inference theory—my concept of mental states are formed with a necessary egocentricity, e.g. anger means *my* anger. How then can I apply mental concepts to others on this theory, when one of the essential conditions for such an application (namely, the egocentricity) fails?

In this context we fully endorse two very pertinent objections raised by Scheler against the inference-cum-analogy theory. Inference theory assumes that I perceive my own bodily states objectively. This is indeed a wrong assumption. When I am angry, *I do not observe my bodily states as marks of my mental state*. What really happens is that my bodily states are experienced—not objectively, not as distinct marks of mental states—but as undistinguished from, in fact as one with, perhaps as saturated with the mental state. So if I do know the other as angry, it is because I perceive his bodily states also as *saturated with his mental states*. The body in the context of self-knowledge (either of my own knowledge or of the alter-ego) is not a thing, it possesses a level of subjectivity. This truth has been admitted by the great contemporary Indian thinker—Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya.<sup>6</sup>

Depending on Child Psychology, it may be argued that we learn much early to recognise other people's emotions before we introspect into ours. The basic premise

then of the theory that I first know myself and then only know of others appears to be wrong, and the backbone of the inference-theory is broken beyond repair. Wittgenstein<sup>7</sup> also has pointed out the same error in the inferential theory.

The position that one always starts from knowledge about oneself is not also acceptable. It is not possible within the brief paper to argue adequately against this position. But suffice it to say that the notion of 'I' seems derivative from prior we-consciousness (I with others—). Even if this cannot be accepted, the inference-theory seems to be far removed from what actually happens. When I say 'You are angry' or 'He is happy'; I am not inferring anything from anything else. The overt behaviours can never justify such an inference nor do I really so infer. I seem to know it directly and my knowledge about 'you' or 'he' seems ultimately to be based on *direct perception*. The statements I make about you are like any other statement I make about myself and in the linguistic system both 'you' and 'I' belong to the same type of primacy and immediacy. This is the very basis of verbal communication.

### III

The actuality of this direct knowledge of the other self or the alter ego brings us to the proper subject of discussion here. I shall try in this section to clarify the expressions 'direct-experience' 'given' etc. in order to support the contention that the alter ego is directly known. A few words on knowledge, though it might appear to be peremptory, cannot be helped.

It is my contention that knowledge involves a unity of thought and action. The action in knowledge, more specifically perceptual knowledge, is in the form of 'participation'

between the 'agent' and the 'other'. The subject object terminology seems to blur the active character of knowledge and create an insurmountable barrier between the two. And on this presupposition knowledge of the alter ego becomes impossible.

With these few words on knowledge (which I am sure, appear dogmatic), I pass on to the discussion of direct knowledge. Direct knowledge or, as it is commonly called, perceptual knowledge, is a *paradigm case* of knowledge. Every other knowledge is somehow based on direct knowledge. The basic mode of knowledge which I have of myself and also of others is 'direct knowledge'.

It is generally believed that direct knowledge is totally unmediated knowledge. Such a belief results in the two-factor analysis of knowledge, and the three-factor analysis of knowledge into subject, object and content is rejected on the ground of its failure to explain direct knowledge. This is muddling the whole issue. Content theory can be so formulated that it can explain direct knowledge. This formulation depends on how we understand the nature of the content. If the content is 'transparent' rather than 'opaque', content does not stand on the way of direct knowledge. Here the supporters of the two-factor theory may fall back on the other point that content makes knowledge mediate and so, direct knowledge is inexplicable on the three-factor analysis of knowledge. To this it may be pointed out that a totally unmediated knowledge is not possible. Even in ordinary perceptual knowledge, the mediation of the senses is there. Perception has certainly a core of unmediated given but there is a cluster of mediated data around this core. In this sense no knowledge is direct. It is suggested therefore, that we may accept the *Nyāya* contention of dividing knowledge into perceptual and non-perceptual (inferential and verbal) rather than dividing it

into 'direct' and 'indirect'. 'Direct' knowledge may be taken to mean perceptual knowledge and in this sense it is the paradigm case of knowledge. In perceptual knowledge there is a *ready contact with the given* and this is the core of immediacy which marks off perceptual knowledge from every other knowledge. So, in claiming 'direct knowledge' of self we are demanding its perceptual acquaintance. This implies the givenness of the self.

A few sentences on the meaning of the 'given' may not be out of place here.<sup>8</sup> Some philosophers do not admit the given at all. They think that either it is a conceptual construction or a linguistic decision for a particular usage. Some who admit the given try to explain it in terms of a particular mode of givenness. For example, some hold that the sensedata alone are given. Both these groups of philosophers are mistaken. It is not for the philosopher to decide whether something is given or not or to recommend which things should be taken as given. He is to describe phenomenologically the meaning and modes of givenness. That things and persons are given is a fact beyond doubt and any question regarding this fact cannot be entertained. For, such a doubt leads only to such self-defeating positions as solipsism or to scepticism (and as both are non-falsifiable, they are beyond the realm of philosophical discussion). A philosopher can only discuss the modes of givenness in case of things and persons and cannot significantly express any doubt concerning their givenness. The given is always *lived*; this living is not determined by decision, still less by linguistic usage. This lived given is continuous and has no sharp boundary in it. The boundary is only conceptually imposed upon it. This lived given frustrates the abstractionist strategy frequently resorted to by the phenomenalist. The scepticism and psychological atomism of the phenomenalist are unfortunate consequences resulting from his attempt to escape the necessity of the lived given.

The 'given' is not necessarily the same as the analytically 'simplest' nor is it the 'immediate' presentation which is received passively. The 'given' is given to an active and appreciative consciousness which also, to some extent, modifies the given and the given is never to be treated as self-complete.

The mode of givenness of things and persons is *practical* though there is a variation of degree in the practicality. The physical object I perceive is perceived as a totality though only a part of it is presented to my senses. This perception of the 'whole' as rightly pointed out by the Gestaltists, reveals the fact that the thing is the object of my intention. Passive apprehension can never present the thing as a whole. The atomistic theory of presentation misses this truth. To the atomist, a thing is nothing but a cluster of qualities or relations, a sense data; they fail to account for the unity without which the thing is non-existent. This unity is determined to some extent by the practical intention which I have towards the thing. The thing as offering resistance to my intention according to its inherent, independent rules is the object of my manipulation. And this active, practical relation to the thing determines the character of the thing to some extent. In the sense in which the 'given' is that which is not inferred or constructed or linguistically decided, '*persons*' are also given. The mode of givenness, as already noted, is practical. The *active relation* with the given or the other is the relation of *participation*. The objection that the given is given to a subject and so a subject cannot be given is pointless. For, (a) we are not talking about the epistemic subject which by definition can never be given. We are talking of *the other as a person*. (b) The given should not be misunderstood as the immediate datum to be received passively. The given is that which calls forth practical manipulation and activity on my part and in this sense it also has a function. The person manifests

its activity through deeper mutuality and this marks out a distinction between the object as given and the person as given. The person as given prompts me to greater activity and so to a higher degree of participation resulting in higher degree of knowledge. It leads not only to my enjoyment of the other in this participation but also to my enjoyment of my own self.

One important result of the foregoing remarks may be laid down here. Many philosophers concerned with the problem of knowledge of mind or self have started by taking explicitly or implicitly perception of physical objects as the paradigm case of perceptual, or non-inferential or direct knowledge. This we may say now is wrong. Perception, or non-inferential (or direct) knowledge of mind or selves is *sui generis*; and if any knowledge is at all to be a paradigm case of knowledge we may look upon this as one: that would serve us in better stead in explaining not only knowledge of minds but also knowledge of physical objects. This is what, in a way, we have tried to do,

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